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**THE TIMES**

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MARCH 5 1982

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By John Bayley

E. E. CUMMINGS:  
Complete Poems  
1910-1962
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Complete Poems. £40.  
0 246 10974 2

RICHARD S. KENNEDY:  
*Dreams in the Mirror*  
A Biography of E. E. Cummings  
528pp. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.  
0 87140 638 1

American poetry has two traditions: open and closed. The first may well be the mutated offspring of the styles of poetry shipped over wholesale, at one time or another, from England; the second represents the more or less systematic repudiation of those ready-made poetics by the developing American consciousness. "Closed" poetry is in fact usually much more original in technique and tone than "open" poetry, and it reveals its ancestry only in its degree of encapsulation. Its idiom is self-defining; it does not merge with or enter other poetic areas; it cannot breed, and can hardly even metamorphose.

The immense and various achievements of American poetry owe much to the difference between these two traditions, and to their possible modes of combination. Robert Frost might be said to write a closed sort of poetry that looks as if it were open: the style of the first deviously and beautifully works to give the impression of the second. Something altogether more complex but not wholly dissimilar seems to be taking place in the poetry of Wallace Stevens and John Berryman. But the boldness of American poetry is towards the previously undefined and unexpressed, although poets of the open tradition - Robinson Jeffers, Robert Lowell (who at moments can sound so strangely like him), William Carlos Williams, A. R. Ammons, John Ashbery - are not only obvious heirs of Whitman but are all, as it were, on the best of terms with the laborious traditions and hermetic practices of closed poetry: they are as familiar with Emily Dickinson as they are with Ezra Pound, and with Edwin Arlington Robinson, John

Crowe Ransom, Marianne Moore and E. E. Cummings as well.

What do not pass from one tradition to the other are the sense and the uses of time. "Closed" poets may have long careers - some of the longest, steadiest and most prolific - but time seems to stand still for them (and so for their readers). They do not, like the two spectral poets in the waning dusk of *Little Gidding*, "urge the mind to aftersight and foresight". Again, the cause may be essentially historical. In 1867 Henry Timrod composed an "Ode for the Commemoration of the Fallen":

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!  
There is no holier spot of ground  
Than where defeated valour lies,  
By mourning beauty crowned!

The homely "spot" does not prevent the poetry from slipping effortlessly, and very movingly, into the English idiom of more than a hundred years earlier, the commemorative idiom of Collins. But there is nothing derivative or old-fashioned about the sound of it: it ignores time, standing in its own enclosure outside it. The Timrod syndrome, as we might call it, is surprisingly endemic in closed American poetry: an idiom, once fixed (and no matter where it comes from), has its own special place. English and European poetry, by contrast, is a great deal more corporate and collective, moving all together when it moves at all. And Cummings offers a striking example of the Timrod syndrome in a very different guise: he too can tranquilly ignore what is going on outside his own self-occupied enclosure, imperious to fate and history, of which contemporaries like his friend Allen Tate, and the younger generation of Robert Lowell, were so wonderfully aware. No poetry could be less closed than the "Ode to the Confederate Dead":

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past,  
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising  
Demons out of the earth - they will not last.

It is the implicit claim of American open poetry not "to last", but to be here just that state of instability and turmoil which, as it does also in Lowell's "For the Union Dead", joins the personal to the public chimera, the predicament of now to that of the past.

Such poetry is its own continuing

drama, and also an index of changing awareness. Inside their own closed idiom a John Crowe Ransom or an E. E. Cummings can do almost anything, provided they do not reveal themselves to be sensitive to outside possibilities. The poems they make must not show signs of wanting to be "understood". Ransom perceived this very well: "little helpless", as Cummings's first wife called him, did not. The wife, Elaine Thayer, also made the memorable comment: "I don't like people who want to be understood". A perpetual child, Cummings did like to be understood, and his charm made his friends eager to help

and protect him. But in his best poems he is absorbed, like a good child in its toys, and isn't in the least concerned with understanding. The analogy is exact, for the reader must get down with the poet among the building blocks on the floor; it is no good meeting him when he is charming the grown-ups - especially the more sentimental ones - with his cute ways. Auden once wrote that "to grow up does not mean to outgrow either childhood or adolescence but to make use of them in an adult way." By this criterion Cummings's poetic technique are designed to perpetuate adolescence, both in the poetry and the poet.

Most good poets suffer for their gift and use it to make such suffering visible - to write out the nature of it is to enhance its reality. Cummings uses the gift to retain and maximize the insulation of a happy childhood. Poetry is his toy, but not "his toy, his dream, his rest", as it was for Berryman and Lowell, the plotted and cultivated scenario of an otherwise distracted existence. It is a paradox that although Cummings's typographical dodges seem to be drawing attention to themselves they in fact come off best when they are at their least self-conscious. The poems that are admirable in *Tulips and Chineries* (published in 1922, a memorable year in literary annals) are the series of "Actualities" and "Post Impressions". Sexual experience with ladies like Marj and Lil provided Cummings with the perfect subject for his format: detachment in comic physical involvement, the agilely precarious recording of experience and appearances, even as the poet lies passive in the sleazy, clumsy, but not hostile machine which he is laboriously manipulating. Experience, particularly sexual experience, is like a new American mechanism to be spryly mastered (as in that splendid poem "she being Brand") and the poet in the happiest way is both operator and passive recorder.

All his life Cummings was able to write such poems, but they alternate with the winsome and folksy type which became more common as time went on. Here his best technique goes bad on him; artful verbalization emphasizes rather than remakes cliché, as it often does in the poetry or Dylan Thomas, with which Cummings's has many affinities. But what suits the rhymed sentences of *Patience* Strong sounds worse than banal in the arrangement of such virtuoso:

the trick of finding what you didn't lose  
(existing's tricky; but to live's a gift)  
the teachable imposture of always  
arriving at the place you never left

A poem from Cummings's juvenilia borrows Keats's thrust:  
Music is sweet from the thrush's throat!  
Oh little thrush  
With the holy note,  
Like a footstep of God in a sick-room's hush

My soul you crush.  
That is engaging, but the note is still being struck fifty years later,

"o purple finch  
please tell me why  
this summer weed (and you and i  
who love so much to live) must die"

Finches, unlike thrushes, do not in fact sing; but this special bird, "eagerly sweet carolling", informs the poet that it would not be able to do so if it had anything to tell him. The early thrush poem seems an honest effort, but the purple finch has acquired a style quite incongruous with what it is required to say.

The young Cummings was clearly very bright and quick to learn, but unlike his master Pound he has no real intellectual curiosity, and little wish to understand other sorts of art than the ones he could make use of. Unlike most good poets he was inarticulate in a critical context. His attempt in the 1920s to write about T. S. Eliot's poetry for the *Dial* had to be rejected after he had produced a few comments on the level of "this is one of the few huge fragilities before which comment is disgusting". His prefaces to his collections make embarrassing reading, and are not unlike Dylan Thomas's comments on his own verse. In the 1950s Cummings too became a great draw on the poetry-reading circuit, his Peter Pan charm making a special appeal to girl students. But he was happiest whittling away in the Wendy house at Patchin Place, Greenwich Village, or at Joy Farm, the New Hampshire holiday home of his parents.

In a political sense he was equally

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naive. He had met and admired Aragon in Europe, and in 1931 translated his laborious (and unpunctuated) long poem *Front Rouge*: it is hard to say whether the translation or the original is the more *enigmatique*. Cummings's own visit to the Soviet Union where he had no one to look after him, was such a chapter of minor accidents and misfortunes that he does not seem to have had time for any of the larger statements of retrospective admiration or disillusion customarily among writers at the time: he was too busy recording the minutiae of what happened to him. Late in life, in 1956, he produced a little poem about the martyrdom of Hungary which must have brought a blush for poetry to the cheek of W. H. Auden, if he ever read it (it is instructive to compare Auden's own succinct poetic comment on the event: "The ogre does what ogres can..."). On the other hand the poem beginning:

16 heures  
L'Étoile

the communists have fine eyes  
is highly memorable because it uniquely and effectively registers a chaotic, child's-eye impression of the genuine Cummings sort. It is the difference between the private and public face, the public and private comment. Poets march against the Bomb and make their own protests, but Cummings's public announcement that he could "never forgive" President Truman for dropping the bombs was merely absurd. It sounds like a small boy who says he will never forgive you for sneaking off with his pencil sharpener. After which he would soon recover what Cummings artlessly referred to as his "natural buoyancy of spirits".

Not unnaturally, father-figures were important to Cummings. His own father was a remarkable man, a self-made Baptist minister who became influential in cultural circles in Cambridge and Boston and well known throughout the United States for his writings and the causes he sponsored. He also made a fair amount of money. He was obsessively devoted to his son, to whose interests as an artist, writer and erratic husband he devoted himself tirelessly; but he was also anxious to keep Cummings permanently captive to the family on a regular allowance. Cummings had to escape from this overpowering solitude, but he never escaped very far, and he always hero-worshipped his father ("He is a famous man whereas I am a small eye poet") and ran for help to him in crises. He was also very close to a warm and sympathetic mother, the closer after his father, motoring up to New Hampshire, was killed by a train on a level-crossing in a snowstorm: his mother survived with a fractured skull.

This oedipal experience finally liberated Cummings, and significantly stabilized his own private life. Of his three beautiful wives the only one who responded to and got on with his mother was the third, Marion Morehouse, an ex-model and failed actress, and the Cummings remained happily married until his death, in 1962. Elaine Thayer, his first wife, was also socially the grandest, a demurely dazzling little rich girl, married to the young millionaire dilettante Scofield Thayer, who admired Cummings's verses at Harvard, became his first patron, and sent a cheque for a thousand dollars for the epitaph on Cummings's tomb. Thayer took an emancipated view of marriage, lived in a bachelor penthouse and neglected his wife, who inveigled Cummings into a kind of Petrus Pan and Wendy affair, as a result of which a daughter was born. After divorce, and remarriage to Cummings, Elaine reverted to type and became disenchantedly tough-minded, soon going off with an Irish banker. For many years Cummings was denied access to his daughter, who grew up not knowing he was her father. Cummings wept from crying pain to find his second wife was a demonic lady who when in liquor, as she usually was, complained loudly and publicly about the small size of his penis.

These facts about Cummings's life are not usually given the time and attention which Cummings himself has given to them. They are not usually given the time and attention which Cummings himself has given to them. They are not usually given the time and attention which Cummings himself has given to them.

with most imaginative writers, that the life helps us to see more deeply into the art, to understand it better. This might be a sign that the art itself is inferior, but in Cummings's case we can hardly say that. Most bad art is an involuntary pastiche of what was going at the time: his is certainly not. He was a genuine original, like John Crowe Ransom, who has also recently been the subject of a big biography, Thomas Daniel Young's *Gentleman in a Distcoat*. The charm of both books is that they could in a sense have been written about anybody, and their accumulation of careful, often pedestrian detail is interesting in itself rather than for the light it throws upon the subjects. They are "pure" biographies, like an old-time Bradshaw. Ransom was of course different, a Southern gentleman, a scholar, golfer, and quietly devoted family man. A hood seems to cover his personality; nothing can be flushed out from the darkness under it, and - as in the case of Cummings's more conventionally racy life - there was probably nothing much there. The main interest of Ransom's biography is in the group of critics and poets with whom he was associated.

With both, the talent for composing a "closed" kind of poetry seems independent of the nature of the poet, even seems to act as a substitute for it. Both live in the ponderous past, encased in solid Victorian three-decker jobs which might have been composed about the time George Eliot died and bespoken by the family of an influential bishop. As we move on from winter engagements to summer vacations ("there was some talk of their going again to Bangor that year but in the event they did not"), we marvel at the meticulousness of the research (Cummings's Aunt Jane left him seventeen thousand, four hundred and twenty three dollars and sixty four cents) and come to love it for its own sake. The tone, a little owlish in its reverence for the past, seems as appropriate to the vanished 1930s as art deco. It is with this sort of decorum that the Cummingses sometimes stayed in the summer with Max Eastman and his wife at Martha's Vineyard, and that the Eastmans had a private beach that allowed for nude bathing. Marion especially enjoyed it, for, proud of the beauty of her body, she liked to share it with intimate friends. A grainy photograph shows nice faces, teeth and smiles, but discreetly cuts out anything below them.

Even Cummings's experiences in France in the First World War - experiences that led to the writing of *The Enormous Room* - become part of the family archive. His duties were limited to vanishing down ambulances behind the lines, and even there he behaved so irresponsibly that he and a fellow delinquent were sent to a detention centre for dubious foreigners and minor offenders. This was like a mad school, which suited Cummings exactly. He loved the misfits there - "delectable mountains" as he calls them - and his lively account of the place is still highly readable. Despite the occasional tedium of the macaronic style, its vision of excremental innocence still survives while *Three Soldiers*, the more painstaking war novel by Cummings's friend Dos Passos, has become hardly more than a curiosity.

At its best, *The Enormous Room* has the clear ebullient vividness which Cummings got from his hero Joyce in 1918 bits of *Ulysses* were appearing in *The Little Review* where he found them shortly after he had also discovered Pound. The poem which came as a revelation to him was *The Return* ("Slow on the leash, pallid the leath'ner men") and he wrote soon afterwards a poem which, however much it owes to the classical aura of Pound, Eliot, and Imagism, is unmistakably his own.

Tumbling hair  
picker of buttercups  
dandelions  
And the big bullying daisies  
through the field wonderful  
with eyes a little sorry.  
Another comes  
also picking flowers

The iconography of the Dis and the Persephone story (herself a fallen flower) is compressed into a new and successful form. From his Harvard days Cummings had a ground-

ing in the classics - a considerably better one than Pound - and a good teacher had encouraged him to attempt translations, both free and exact. His technical breakthrough, which still owed much to Pound and was probably not consciously arrived at, was the discovery that the same idiom would fit any situation. Joyce's grand style adapted itself deliberately to the meanest context, and Cummings's miniatures learned to do the same. A simple example is one of the "Portraits in Tulips and Chimneys," "I walked the boulevard":

I saw a dirty child  
skating on noisy wheels of joy  
pathetic dress fluttering  
behind her a mothermonster  
with red gumball face  
cluttered in pursuit  
pleasantly elephantine  
while nearby the father  
a thick cheerful man  
with majestic bulbous lips  
and forlorn pigish hands  
joked to a girlish whore  
with busy rhythmic mouth  
and silly purple eyelids  
of how she was with child

There is here the same dependence on a neat "point" which marks all Cummings's successful poetic contraptions, though the point may build up in the poem's shape and not be sprung in the last line. There are contexts like the "war" poems and the semi-political squibs where such a point will not work, and where Cummings's cute cursory innocence does not answer. But point can come in the form of an excellent descriptive conceit, like the sky in "Impressions IV," first resolved "by the correct fingers of April" into "a clutter of trite jewels".

now like a moth with stumbling  
wings flutters and flops along the  
grass collides with trees and  
houses and finally  
butts into the river  
Himself a painter and draughtsman, though of no great originality or power, Cummings at his verbal best often suggests the painterly techniques of the Impressionists and post-Impressionists and their admiration for Japanese art. His verse in fact is at its best when it draws attention to its own words but to the picture they are bringing into existence. That is the kind of observation that would mean nothing in connection with most poetry, but with Cummings there can be a real sense of space between the words on the page

and the mental images evoked. In the best poems, and the ones that best stand re-reading, we seem to slip straight into the mental images. The zesty verbal capers, anthology pieces such as "anyone lived in a pretty how town", have a short reading life: their verbal substance is not of the kind that survives prolonged acquaintance. The poetry is at its worst when the verbal and sentimental are made to play engaging games together, as in "my father moved through dooms of love" or "sons of unless and children of almost".

This indicates a matter of great importance in relation to Joyce's verbal art. *Finnegans Wake* not only remains wholly and eerily alive but it can move us deeply in the simplest way. Joyce has in a sense found the modern way of doing what Dickens did in relation to crossing-sweepers and the deaths of children and Barak's going out with the tide and David Copperfield's vision of his mother holding up her baby in her arms. Cummings often seems to be looking for the modern way of doing such things, and not finding it. It is of course invidious to compare a great writer with a minor verbal artist, but the point is none the less a valid one. Cummings almost never moves us: he is his own child, too self-absorbed.

Almost never, but he approaches tenderness sometimes, as in the "elictera" poem, in which the word falls through successive slots of meaning - a way of dismissing sentiment, of pushing detail impatiently aside, evading parental exhortation shrugging off oneself and one's dreams - until it falls into its final and tenderly intimate meaning, all the more tender and intimate for being a euphemism, and earning a capital letter.

(dreaming,  
et

cetera, of  
Your smile  
eyes knees and of your Elictera)

In general, though, Cummings has none of the artist's sensitivity to the outside world and to the reality of other people and their responses. Nothing shows this more clearly than a small poem which must upset friends and fellow artists, the non-Jews, as is the way with such things, more than the Jews themselves.

a kike is the most dangerous  
machine as yet invented  
by even yankee ingenu-  
ity (out of a Jew, a few  
dead dollars and some twisted laws)  
it comes both priggish and canted

- "pricked and cuntend" in the original version, which had to be bowdlerized when submitted to the *Quarterly Review of Literature*. It appeared in 1950 in the collection *Xaipe*, published by OUP after Cummings's American publishers had declined to continue making losses on his work.

Despite remonstrances Cummings insisted on including it, whipping out his smallboy reaction and protesting that a kike was not a Jew but an American hybrid, which was the point of the poem, and citing his recent experiences in Hollywood ("a waiting well for Christians") where he had endeared himself to no one and failed to obtain employment. Many Cummings poems, especially in the *Xaipe* volume, are wishfully satirical, but to be effectively bitter a satirist must be involved. Memorable open poetry is subversive in its very nature, but a closed poetry cannot go out to subvert. Shock works like "kike" and "nigger" do not quite seem quaint, however, even in our unshockable era; liberal America minded them very much, and perhaps would still do so. The real trouble is that they point to something men - in both the American and the English sense - in the poet's satiric impulse. As his biographer shrewdly observes, Cummings could only see the world as directed at him and "emblematic" of his situation. So does everyone at times, poets particularly, but while poets like Yeats and Lowell return by this very process to the universal, Cummings remains in his own area of smallness.

Out of it come his own special effects, which are certainly like no one else's. He is a poet for do-it-yourself readers, and the best criticism of his poetry, like Norman Friedman's *E. E. Cummings: The Art of His Poetry*, takes a technical and structural line and gets down to close analysis of the typography. This collected edition is austere and beautifully produced, without notes or introduction, but these are not missed. There are felicities every few pages and once, in a while a whole poem that succeeds. Cummings's own way of treating the mythological flourished and persisted: one of the best of the poems that he wrote towards the end of his career, harking back to the Persephone piece, recounts the tale of Venus, Vulcan, and Mars, and the laughter of the gods when the lovers are taken in the artificer husband's web:

my tragic tale concludes herewith:  
soldier, beware of Mrs Smith

ceeds immediately: "This is surely something akin to the ecstasy in which seers and prophets produced their oracles, though for the skeptical Conrad it was merely a kind of malignant fever." Surely, though the foreigner does keep getting uppy when he is allowed to speak.

All too often, the speech Conrad is permitted is descriptive. Again and again he is dragged out of his study to tell us what the maritime settings looked like, interrupting the flow and contributing little to our understanding of the story. Tennant and Conrad have an effortlessly tedious relation which makes for lively reading.

Not, though, for our edification. Conrad's monotonous fascination with the idea of himself is explained neither historically nor psychologically: it merely keeps reappearing as a guarantor of continuity. An explanation of Conrad's morose, sensitive ego would have to dig deeper into the hidden self-image, which can be reconstructed from the self-projections, but Tennant allows himself no space for such ticklish questions. His tripartite schema is as close as he comes to deep structures in the life, and it is far too easy to be convincing. What is interesting about Conrad as a man is that this apparently static character was neither as charming nor as unlovable as this study finally lets him appear to be. Despite his foibles, he aroused unusual affection, and more suggestion of genuine vulnerability would have been welcome. It is not forthcoming because Tennant has a rattling good yarn to tell, and if its hero seems grotesquely miscast that is his misfortune.

If Tennant's overall strategy is unsuccessful, his local effects are spell-binding. Here is Conrad at work: "When he had a theme that suited him, Conrad wrote with speed, and grace in a flowing rhetoric - sentences that fill whole paragraphs, and paragraphs that almost fill whole chapters - *Lord Jim* has paragraphs that cover four pages." Perhaps the delicately bathetic shift from "whole chapters" to "four pages" is superbly diverting, but Tennant pro-

ceeds immediately: "This is surely something akin to the ecstasy in which seers and prophets produced their oracles, though for the skeptical Conrad it was merely a kind of malignant fever." Surely, though the foreigner does keep getting uppy when he is allowed to speak.

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## Participants and observers

By Keith Jeffery

LORD LONGFORD and ANN McHARDY  
Ulster  
260pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
£10.95.  
0 297 77971 0

It has been remarked that if all the books written about Northern Ireland were placed end to end they might bridge the gap between Protestants and Catholics. Over the past thirteen unhappy years participants and observers have maintained a steady stream of material inspired by the current violence. Such has been the volume of writing that books are now commonly judged on whether they contain sensational revelations or propose miraculous new solutions. The virtues of this book are more modest.

Covering well-trodden ground, and taking no dramatically original angle, it comprises a careful, and largely even-handed, narrative of the background and development of the Northern Ireland troubles. As the authors sensibly observe, Ulster - by which for the most part they mean the six counties of Northern Ireland - cannot be treated in isolation. Particularly in the first half of the book, which covers the period from the early seventeenth century to 1969, they see the Northern Irish question firmly in the context of wider Irish and British political developments. Indeed, throughout the book the perspective adopted is primarily British. Considering the authors' own backgrounds - Longford, an Anglo-Irish peer with an active career in British politics, and McHardy, *The Guardian's* Belfast resident from 1977 to 1980 - this is perfectly understandable. Yet the result of such an approach is that they see the difficulties which British policy-makers have had to face more

acutely than the deficiencies of the policies adopted. In the chapters devoted to the Northern Ireland "statelet", Longford and McHardy are unduly kind to successive British governments who first ignored the province and then, from 1968, sought to employ reluctant Unionists as sub-contractors, forcing Stormont publicly to wash not only its own dirty linen, but Westminster's as well.

The role of Britain in the early 1970s is sometimes misjudged. The authors underestimate the degree to which the insensitively tough security policies initiated by the incoming Conservative government in 1970 alienated Catholic opinion. They overestimate, as many have done, the Labour government's ability to break the 1974 Ulster Workers' Council strike which brought down the power-sharing executive. Nevertheless, they bring out well the British government's vacillations since direct rule, not so much of policy as of technique. Always anxious to establish some devolved administration broadly acceptable to both communities, but never quite sure whether to coerce or conciliate Northern Irish politicians, successive Secretaries of State have so far been unable to find a way out of the imbroglio.

Although it pays some attention to the economic aspects of the Northern Ireland problem, especially the chronically weak industrial base and the concomitant long-term unemployment, Longford and McHardy's book is largely a political account of events, which, perhaps unintentionally, gives the misleading impression that all the important decisions are made by politicians. It is less perceptive when dealing with the myths and traditions, the "applied history", which separately sustain both Northern Irish communities. While clearly documenting the factors underlying nationalist aspirations - and republican terrorism - the authors explain loyalist and loyalist violence less

well. The bulk of the book paints a picture of the loyalists as incomprehensibly ungrateful and intractable. This is certainly the image which Paisley and his followers present, but their public political attitudes simply express their righteous belief that they are fighting for communal survival. Even more than nationalists, loyalists believe that they are engaged in a life-or-death struggle, and this belief fuels their persistent intransigence.

Longford and McHardy vividly illustrate the difficulties of penetrating Northern Ireland's social dynamics in a number of instances. The Unionist farmer who fired a warning shot over the heads of civil rights demonstrators - "vermin", he called them - and then kindly offered Anne McHardy a cup of tea, or the Protestants and Catholic members of the power-sharing executive together singing Irish ballads during the Sunningdale conference, perhaps tell us more about the province's crazy contradictions than a thousand words of political analysis. But missing from the book is a feel for the vitally important emotional dimension of Northern Irish politics, for the passions, not so much of politicians, as of the Protestant and Catholic communities *en masse*. Political leadership, as British administrators have despairingly discovered, barely exists in Northern Ireland, where politicians mostly confine themselves to transmitting historic group aspirations and mouthing traditional sectarian slogans. When they attempt to "lead", they are quickly brought back into line by the constituencies they represent. Paisley flirted with Humphrey Atkins's power-sharing political initiative in 1979-80 only for so long as his supporters believed that cooperation with the Irish Republic was not under discussion. The failure of John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party to put up candidates against the Provisional nominees, Bobby Sands and Owen

Carron, in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-elections last year was a similar, realistic concession to emotional grass-roots opinion.

The narrative ends somewhat gloomily in the summer of 1981, with no solution to the Maze prison hunger strikes immediately in prospect. Although at that time six strikers had died, and were followed by four more, the hunger strikes were called off in October. By the turn of the year the prospects for Northern Ireland were looking distinctly more hopeful. Nevertheless, the hunger strikes' legacy of increased sectarian tension and greater violence did much to harden attitudes on both sides of the communal divide. Longford and McHardy, however, rightly emphasize one positive recent development: the growing acceptance between London and Dublin. By all accounts British-Irish cooperation is beginning to pay off in security terms, and it may yet, more importantly, bring substantial and lasting political benefits by changing the overall framework of Northern Irish politics.

This theme is developed in a quite exceptionally good final chapter which splendidly summarizes the dilemma facing British - and Irish - policy-makers. Above all, and in contrast to the tone of the preceding chapters, it emphasizes that the million "beleaguered" Protestants are

"the key to the situation". Without a shift in Protestant attitudes, there can be no movement towards a long-term settlement. How such a shift might be obtained is a matter of some debate. The authors suggest that the common membership of both parts of Ireland in the EEC, and their similar economic interests, might force Unionists to identify more closely with Dublin than London. Another possibility would be for the British government to use its financial muscle and threaten to cut off its subsidy to Northern Ireland unless there was political compromise. More contentiously, it is argued that Britain should withdraw the "notorious" 1949 guarantee to Unionists that Ireland would not be re-united against their will. Whether the British government is likely to take such action, and whether it would do anything more than simply harden Protestant obduracy is open to question. But the central point is well made that in order to secure a political settlement in Northern Ireland, the British government, perhaps in cooperation with the Irish, will in some way have to accommodate the aspirations and contain the fears of the Protestant community. For more than a decade, an inability fully to appreciate this contrast to the tone of the preceding chapters, it emphasizes that the million "beleaguered" Protestants are

## Lives of the convicts

By Roy Foster

BLANCHE M. TOUHILL:

William Smith O'Brien and his Irish Revolutionary Companions in Penal Exile  
269pp. University of Missouri Press.  
£16.80.  
0 8262 0339 6

This is a bizarre chronicle: anecdotal, credulous and naive in the purest tradition of Lives of the Saints. In a sense this is inevitable, for Blanche M. Touhill excitedly takes at face value William Smith O'Brien's claim to be directly descended from Brian Boru and her historical analysis stops short at the Great Man theory of progression. "Ireland was then leaderless" recurs as an explanation of the march of nationalism. The style is appropriately bathetic ("Mitchel was not just pleased, he was very pleased"); solecisms and infelicities run riot, the Church of Ireland becoming "the Anglican Church" and *The Times* the *London Times*; words are artlessly invented ("hesitance", "Brittania", and, most pleasingly, "baronetie"); inconsistencies abound (within twenty pages Patrick O'Donoghue is metamorphosed from "a clerk in a solicitor's office" to "a successful solicitor"). It is all reminiscent of a chronicle put together with unflagging but misdirected enthusiasm by a follower of Iacobus de Voragine.

The overall message of such a work might simply seem to be that the University of Missouri Press does not employ copy-editors; and this is a great pity. The men who tried to make the 1848 revolution were curiously ill-assorted, and their relations uneasy; the writings of Gayan Duffy and others have imposed a further distance between them and history. The story of their fortunes while transported to Tasmania (when it was still Van Diemen's Land) has some intrinsic interest, and rigorous analysis is needed of their professions, activities and beliefs (the latter ranging from Mitchell's futile gospel of hatred to Smith O'Brien's constitutionalist faith in "the Queen, Lords and Commons of Ireland"). O'Brien himself expresses the contradictions of the gentleman revolutionary as well as of the property Irishman; he has not had his historiographical due.

Professor Touhill does demonstrate the deliberateness with which newspapers and politicians tagged the 1848 affair with the "baggage"

patch" sobriquet (an exercise in defusing propaganda which the authorities in 1916 would have done well to remember); she also details O'Brien's struggles over his status with the Governor of Tasmania, Sir William Denison (later literally "sent forth to govern New South Wales"). O'Brien's own ideas, especially as set out in his later *Letters*, had a certain resonance; he floated notions of an alternative Irish assembly, as later practised by Sinn Féin, and he probably first gave formal currency not only to theories of genocidal intentions on the part of the government in 1846-7, but also of an expanding Irish population rate being reversed by the famine (only recently discredited by demographic analysis). His position as transported hero and his eventual pardon make up a classic Irish nationalist tale. In expressing what Ruth Dudley Edwards has trenchantly called the triumph of failure, it is eventually given the touch of apotheosis by the traditional dispute between family and followers over the hero's corpse. And yet his greatest sorrow on his arrival home (not recorded here) was to find his children speaking with Irish brogues.

The ambivalence of his position, however, is never fully treated by Touhill; nor is the significance of his companions' experience. The pity of it is that the story of their activities and disagreements in exile, to go no further, contains great comic possibilities. Their conceptions of "honour" regarding their tickets-of-leave varied wildly, from Meagher and O'Brien giving formal warnings of intention, and engaging in gentlemanly games of Cowboys and Indians with the authorities, to O'Donoghue's hard-headed and surreptitious absconding. They got drunk, they got lost, they quarrelled, they disapproved of each other's *mesalliances*. They took odd jobs ("meaningful work activities", Professor Touhill calls them). Funds raised for escaping seem to have been diverted into gold-prospecting schemes. "A money-making pack", commented one of their ladies, "who were not true to one another". All this took place against a background of antipodean picaresque, where twelve of the stoutest convicts on one newly arrived ship were at once conscripted to serve as constables. It could make a raucous slice of historical pastiche, in the style of *The Spit-Weed Factor*; or it could follow the timeless achievement of E. H. Carr's *The Romantic Exile*, played in a slightly different key. What the story cannot lend itself to is a rendering into breathless tales of saints and dragons which is what we are presented with here.

## Earning their corn

By Nesta Roberts



Four illustrations which appeared in the Ragged School Union Magazine, 1850: from the book reviewed on this page.

GILLIAN WAGNER:  
Children of the Empire  
284pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
£10.95.  
0 297 78447 6

We cross the bound ocean with gladness  
And when in devotion we're bending  
The knee.

This, this shall our Prayer be  
At the close of each day.  
God prosper the people  
Who sent us away.

So, in the pages of the *Ragged School Union Magazine* in 1857, carolled the purities of children who, during the latter part of the nineteenth century and well into the first half of our own, were shipped out of Britain. They went, to quote from the same source,

To seek for employment  
Where work can be found.  
To meet with enjoyment  
On less crowded ground.

And also, according to the charitable and other agencies which despatched them, to escape from brutal and demoralizing backgrounds. But they were seen, too, as new citizens of Britain overseas, so many bricks for the building of the Empire.

It is difficult for us today to grasp the mystical devotion which, for decades, was inspired by the idea of that Empire. To a marked degree it inherited the ardour which, earlier, had gone into the Evangelical movement, and Evangelicals were prominent among those who, between 1870 and 1928, were responsible for sending some 100,000 children overseas.

If 1870 was the year when child emigration became a recognized movement, the principle had been long established. The British settlements in Virginia and New Zealand were no more than ten years old when the City of London sent a hundred pauper children to the new colony. The motives, clearly, were utilitarian rather than philanthropic. Land had to be stocked with people as well as cattle; around the same time the Virginia Company sent out three hundred tenants for its lands and gardens, a hundred young apprentices and a cargo of "young and uncorrupted maids to make wives to the inhabitants and by that means to make the men more settled and less moveable". The despatching of vagrant children to the American colonies and the West Indies continued through the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth the concept was more generally that of transportation for punishment. It was not until the nineteenth that social reformers battling against juvenile delinquency, juvenile delinquency and such juvenile prisons as the vile ships *Belcher* and *Euryalus*, ancient hulks

moored in the Thames, saw the hope of salvation in the wide, blue yonder.

The Brenton Asylum, the creation of Edward Brenton, a retired naval captain with ideas ahead of his time, who had called *Euryalus* "a floating Bastille", was concerned to teach its boys something of farm work and such relevant skills as grinding their own corn on hand mills before sending them to South Africa, and set up a committee in Cape Town to oversee their welfare. Though the *Tipperary Vindicator* likened the Irish orphans who were sent to Australia to Circassian slaves, those "great white women like ivory the turks sell in the streets", the Irish Poor Law Commissioners shipped out more than 4,000 girls over two years. The Guardians of St Pancras made impeccable arrangements for the welfare of the children whom they sent to the Bermudas, each equipped with a pound of soap, a Bible, Prayer Book and half a crown in cash, besides a generous trousseau, but omitted to get permission from the Poor Law Board, or to bring the children before the Justices to give their consent. As a result, the whole proceeding was judged illegal, though even the Board's Inspector found the scheme "excellent in every way".

Those enterprises, with others like the parties of boys which Shaftesbury's Ragged School Union sent overseas, were ripples foretelling the great wave of child emigration which gathered and grew during the last few decades of the century, to reach its crest in the early 1900s. For "child", in some instances, one might read "infant". The members of the first party of seventy-five little girls whom Maria Rye took across the Atlantic, to be fostered or adopted into "good Christian homes", ranged in age from four to twelve years old. Miss Rye, an immensely able and also an opinionated and generally impossible woman, had earlier run the Female Middle Class Emigration Society in a fashion which caused the senior Canadian emigration agent in Britain to say that she was not a philanthropist but "a passenger agent of the sharpest description". She soon realized that the most profitable and trouble-free way to emigrate children was to take them from the workhouse, so that the Boards of Guardians would be responsible for them until they were eighteen. Her books hardly bore inspection and she made no effort to visit the children once placed.

Annie Macpherson, her contemporary, a far different character with a record of devoted work among slum children, kept faultless accounts and was conscientious about visiting the young emigrants. Dr Barnardo, the biggest of the big battalions which followed, prided itself on the efficiency

of its arrangements. The Doctor himself laid down that continued supervision must be exercised over the children placed in Canadian homesteads; first by systematic visitation; second by regular correspondence. "Emigration in the case of young children, without continuous supervision is in our opinion presumptuous folly and simply courts disaster", he wrote.

Between intention and reality a gulf yawned. None of the agencies seemed to have any understanding of the terror and loneliness likely to be suffered by a child uprooted from its familiar surroundings and dumped on an isolated farm. The distances involved made regular or frequent visiting of the children virtually impossible. In any case, how accurately was the visitor, who was probably not a skilled social worker, likely to assess the situation? If tragedies like the death of a Barnardo boy immigrant from neglect and ill treatment were, mercifully, exceptional, many of the young apprentices knew hardship. By definition the farmers who took them did so because they needed labour and could not afford a hired man. In the words of one of them: "A child costs no more to keep than a chicken", and whether in the fields or in the kitchen the children had to earn their corn.

To set against that, there were undoubtedly successes, children who found loving adoptive homes, others who made decent careers in or out of farming. And, as some of the agencies declared, the alternatives were worse. Shaftesbury had spoken of more than 30,000 "naked, filthy, roaming, lawless and deserted children in London alone". Annie Macpherson thought everyone should be "deeply thankful that in parts of the East End four out of every five infants die before they reach their fifth year, because the other side of the picture among the living ones is so black, so awful, so crushing in its dreadful realities." Barnardo, many of whose children were not orphans, admitted to practising "philanthropic abduction" to separate some of them from parents whom he considered undesirable, felt that "to behold young men and women crowded together in pestilential rookeries without the least provision for decency" was "almost enough to fill the bravest reformer with despair".

To a later generation an equally horrifying factor in the situation is that so many good and brave reformers should have accepted the conditions as given and turned their energies into rescue work rather than attacking root causes. Would a Blake instead of a Barnardo have rather preached revolution, and a fig for the Empire?

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Edited and translated with an introduction by John B. Thompson  
314pp. Cambridge University Press/Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. £20 (paperback, £6.95).

Paul Ricoeur is something of a phenomenon among modern philosophers. Schooled in phenomenology, he has remained true to views that have largely gone out of fashion in France, following the ascendancy of structuralism and "post-structuralist" philosophies in that country. But he has certainly not been content dogmatically to defend an established position. On the contrary, he has modified and elaborated his views over the course of an extraordinarily productive career. Rather than succumb to fashion, he has attempted to confront other philosophical standpoints in such a way as to absorb their positive contributions into his own work. At a time when Anglo-Saxon philosophy at last seems to be emerging from its self-imposed isolation from Continental thought, Ricoeur's writings have much to commend them to the English-speaking reader. His work is concerned with traditions of philosophy only poorly known in Britain and the United States - phenomenology, structuralism and hermeneutics. But, unlike many of his counterparts in France or in Germany, his style is accessible and incisive. Moreover, he is well-versed in analytical philosophy, and particularly in his more recent writings he makes frequent reference to the ideas of British and American authors.

Some of the major themes in Ricoeur's writings, concerned with language, the interpretation of meaning, and the nature of action, overlap directly with the concerns of many analytical philosophers. But Ricoeur's approach to these matters derives from a very different philosophical background, indebted to German as well as to French thought. During the Second World War, he was a prisoner in Germany, but the experience was not for him wholly unhappy one. He was allowed by his captors to read German philosophical texts, some of which made a lasting impression upon him - in particular, the works of Husserl, Heidegger and Jaspers. Soon after his return to France, he established himself as a foremost authority on phenomenology, translating the first volume of Husserl's *Ideen* and publishing among other things a substantial study of Jaspers.

Ricoeur's conception of phenomenology was quite different from that popularized by Sartre as "existentialism". Thus he maintained his distance from the first wave of philosophy in which French high culture became immersed in the immediate post-war period, as he was to do in the face of subsequent trends. When others relinquished Husserl and Heidegger in favour of Lévi-Strauss, Saussure and Freud, Ricoeur did not follow them. But he did produce major works dealing with these latter writers: *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud* (1965) and *Le Conflit des interprétations* (1969). In these books he showed himself to be one of the most perceptive critics of structuralism; each contains ideas of enduring importance. Each also attests to the increasing influence of hermeneutics upon Ricoeur's thinking, an interest which has continued to deepen in his current writings.

The essays which John Thompson has assembled under the title *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* are all taken from Ricoeur's recent work. The book is beautifully produced, the essays have been chosen with care, and the volume has the benefit of an extensive introduction by its editor. It offers a comprehensive and integrated conspectus of Ricoeur's ideas. In his superb introductory discussion, Thompson shows how Ricoeur has elaborated a synthesis between phenomenology and hermeneutics of a highly original

kind. His early works were preoccupied with developing a philosophy of the will, and with relating this to human fallibility. Thompson's analysis indicates how Ricoeur managed to break free from the confines of subjectivism to which phenomenology seemed doomed. Early on in his career, he came to the view that an account of human agency, its origins and its limits, cannot be "derived" from intentional structures, as Husserl had argued. Phenomenology should rather be seen as the end-result of philosophy, not its beginning. The human self is not a given, unitary form, but a series of mediations between the voluntary and the involuntary.

Such an emphasis allowed Ricoeur to confront the structuralist theme of the "de-centring of the subject" in a sympathetic manner. Ricoeur accepts that philosophy can no longer proceed as though the human mind or consciousness is transparent to the self. The self must be approached through a "detour" by way of the "unstable syntheses" which make us what we are as human beings. Structuralist and post-structuralist philosophies, however, are only equipped to guide us through part of this detour, because they lack a theory of symbolic interpretation such as only hermeneutics can provide. This basic standpoint, as elaborated in the course of his writings, has prompted Ricoeur to develop original analyses of a wide variety of philosophical problems. I can only mention a few of those discussed in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*; but I hope these will make clear the interest which his work holds for different areas of philosophy, social theory, and literary criticism.

Ricoeur's concern with Freud, and particularly with the epistemological status of psychoanalytic theory, is echoed in several of the essays in the book, and is the direct subject-matter of one of them. Whatever Freud himself might have believed, a natural science of human conduct. It is essentially a hermeneutic endeavour, dealing with the detours of interpretation whereby the meanings of unconscious symbols are disclosed. But Ricoeur is critical of Lacan's attempt, as he sees it, to situate psychoanalysis wholly within language. The "semantics of desire" must be related to the "energetic" dimension of repression; to the hidden springs of action which are the very source of the barriers that separate from the modalities of the unconscious. The claims of Freud, Ricoeur tries to show, are not refractory to "proof". However, the question of what is to count as proof in psychoanalysis must combine a range of criteria divergent from those ordinarily applied in natural science.

Ricoeur's philosophy of language has been in some part forged out of his critical encounter with structuralism. He has a number of objections to structuralist thought, as represented in particular by Lévi-Strauss, but also by Saussure's linguistics. Structuralism presumes, but does not develop, a hermeneutics that would explicate the "conflict of interpretations" always involved in the production of meaning. It thus cannot provide the basis for an overall form of philosophy; however useful some of its suppositions may be for the study of specific linguistic forms, such as

myths or texts. But structuralism also suppresses two phenomena which, Ricoeur argues forcibly, are essential to language: the intention of language-users to say something; and the intention to say something about something.

Rather than opposing, as Saussure does, *langue* (the system of language) and *parole* (particular words or forms of speech), Ricoeur distinguishes between the system of language and discourse. There is a discontinuity between the semiotics of language as a system, and the articulation of sentences in modes of discourse. The semantics of discourse cannot be directly inferred from the semiotics of sign structures. Discourse is an intrinsically creative phenomenon, the intersection of two senses of meaning: what speakers mean to say, and the meaning, or meanings, of what they say. Here Ricoeur makes use of speech-act theory, as developed by Austin, Strawson and Searle. The context of language-use is an integral feature of these two aspects of meaning. Hence, semantics can never be reduced to semiotics; the former is actually the foundation of the latter. The polysemic character of words is an irreducible characteristic of discourse.

Polysemy provides what Ricoeur calls a "surplus of meaning" that is the origin of metaphor, about which he has a lot to say. Metaphor has often been regarded as a rhetorical device, marginal to language as a whole, in which a figurative word is substituted for a literal one. But this view, according to Ricoeur, both misunderstands the nature of metaphor and greatly underestimates its significance for language. Metaphor does not operate at the level of the word or sign, but at the level of discourse. Metaphor is a syntactically deviant usage which establishes a novel connection within the terms of a discourse. Seen in the unfolding of discourse, metaphor is the very process whereby new meanings are created. An interesting part of Ricoeur's thesis is the idea that metaphor is not a figurative departure from a baseline of linguistic reference. Metaphor actually transforms the referential dimension of language, building new modes of representing or describing reality.

As all this might indicate, Ricoeur's approach to the theory of the text differs substantially from those associated with structuralism or post-structuralism. A text is not an expression of discourse in general, but a specific work of discourse, produced as a result of labour, that shapes discourse into a particular configuration. "The work", Ricoeur says, "is submitted to a form of codification which is applied to the composition itself, and which transforms discourse into a story, a poem, an essay, etc. . . . Composition, belonging to a genre and individual style, characterises discourse as a work. The very word 'work' reveals the nature of these new categories: they are categories of production and of labour." Of course, a text is not only a work, it is a written work, and this gives texts an autonomy which speech lacks because of its transient character. A text is not merely the realization of spoken discourse. "It becomes, in Ricoeur's term, 'distanced' from the conditions of its production in ways which spoken discourse cannot be. The meaning of

what an author writes in a text escapes the bounds of what he or she meant to convey, in the original circumstances in which it was fashioned. Whereas spoken discourse is contextually bound to a particular time and place, a text is available to an indefinite audience across time and space. Moreover, in contrast to the referential components of speech, the text opens up referential properties of a new kind. Texts disclose possible worlds, into which readers can enter. Texts, Ricoeur claims, "free reference from the limits of ostensive reference".

The interpretation of texts, Ricoeur points out, has always been the primary domain of hermeneutics. As he proposes in one of the key essays in the book ("The model of the text: meaningful action considered as a text"), the text can be used to demonstrate how hermeneutics can contribute to the explication of human conduct in general. Human action may be regarded as a text which can be interpreted in terms of the forms of distanciation it expresses. Such a standpoint, Ricoeur suggests, may help us resolve certain problems of *Verstehen* - "understanding" - raised by Dilthey and Max Weber among many others. Meaningful action can be studied only in so far as it becomes objectified in a way rather similar to the autonomy of the text. Actions have consequences, and make up patterns which exceed the intentions of those who initiate them. As sedimented in time, human deeds become the "institutions" whose character is detached from the actors' intentions. Human action is an "open work" addressed, as Hegel says, to history. *Verstehen* is indeed fundamental to the human sciences, but the model of the text shows that it is not founded upon an "empathic" grasp of the subjectivity of actors. As in the case of texts, understanding the social world created through human action is substantially separate from - and a precondition of - grasping the mental processes of individual actors.

Ricoeur's conception of hermeneutics differs substantially from that of H.-G. Gadamer, his famous contemporary in Germany. Both are strongly influenced by Heidegger, but Ricoeur rejects Gadamer's dissociation of truth from method; methodological reflection, for Ricoeur, is essential to the "conflict of interpretations" which is the essence of hermeneutics. But if he disagrees with Gadamer, Ricoeur also disagrees with one of the latter's most illustrious critics, Jürgen Habermas. The controversy between Gadamer and Habermas over the nature and scope of hermeneutics has been the subject of commentary by a variety of writers, but Ricoeur's discussion of the debate, in his essay "Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology", is one of the most cogent that anyone has made. The core of the debate concerns the question whether or not hermeneutics can cope with the problem of ideology. Ricoeur argues persuasively that the opposition of hermeneutics and critical theory is a mistaken one. Hermeneutics can itself be, and should be, critical. Habermas argues that ideology is distorted communication, and that the aim of critical theory is to emancipate human social life from such distortion. But surely, Ricoeur asks, this coincides with the objective of hermeneutics: the expansion of communication through the exploration of divergent interpretations of meaning? "It is the task of philosophical hermeneutics," he concludes, "to eliminate deceptive antipodes which would oppose the interest in the re-interpretation of cultural heritages received from the past and the interest in the futuristic projections of a liberated humanity. The moment these two interests become radically separate, then hermeneutics and critique will themselves be no more than 'ideologies'!"

Critical hermeneutics, an appropriate term, perhaps, with which to sum up Ricoeur's own philosophical position. I do not think that anyone would fail to find illumination and challenge in reading him.

## Girl reading

She overhears the sound of things in hiding. She bites an apple and imagines orchard starlight. Each time she flicks her thumb, its tip, she tastes the barely shaking branches, she hears a sigh migrate from page to page.

Bill Manhire

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# Weaving, deceiving and indecision

By Lorna Sage

MARY R. LEFKOWITZ:  
*Heroines and Hysterics*  
 96pp. Duckworth. £8.95.  
 0 7156 1518 1

Classical studies once seemed to imply a vaguely androgynous aspiration but over the last ten years or so they have become a focus for much more radical speculation about sexual roles and sexual difference - neatly reflecting (as they always did, perhaps not to) current preoccupations. Semonides of Amorgos, poet-philosopher of the seventh century BC, for instance, can seldom have been so oft-quoted:

From the beginning the god made the mind of woman  
 A thing apart. One he made from the long-haired sow;  
 While she wallows in the mud and rolls about on the ground,  
 Everything at home lies in a mess.  
 Another doesn't take baths but sits about  
 In the shit in dirty clothes and gets fatter and fatter.  
 The god made another one from the evil fox

Semonides was a prize example in Sarah Pomeroy's 1975 *Goddesses, Whores, and Slaves*, a bitterly enthusiastic exercise in literary archaeology, laying bare the foundations of misogyny. The maddest myths about the creation of women acquire a new piquancy these days.

Of the men who came into the world, those who were cowards or led unrighteous lives may with reason be supposed to have changed into the nature of women in the second generation. And this was the reason why at that time the gods created in us the desire of sexual intercourse.

Well, obviously. This is Plato's *Timaeus*, and one can see why scholars interested in women's "nature" have found it in a very heartening, partly because it so clearly suggests, as Noel Coward used to put it, that things might have been organized better. The rest of the passage is just as interesting. The penis is like a troublesome animal, a domestic parasite:

and the same is the case with the so-called womb or matrix of women; the animal within them is desirous of procreating children, and when remaining fruitful long beyond its proper time, gets discontented and angry, and wandering in every direction through the body, closes up the passages of the breath, and drives them to extremity.

Eventually, their perispermic animals bring men and women together. Perhaps. The bringing together involves a disputed reading, a textual crux, as well it might.

As this kind of material undergoes a new translation, the extraordinary difficulty of finding out what Greek women were, or felt themselves to be, becomes increasingly pressing. The wandering womb is the subject of one of the most interesting pieces in Mary Lefkowitz's *Heroines and Hysterics*, and, as she shows, the doctors were no more troubled by actual anatomy than Plato. Women, in more senses than one, were a vagrant, suffering space in the culture, only safe of "well" when child-bearing. "Treatment of the disorder involves giving the womb what it wants to receive seed and to produce offspring. Doctors believed, Ms Lefkowitz suggests, more like priests than anything else, explaining the nature of the powerful forces beyond man's control, and certainly beyond woman's biology, like so much else about her, obscure and fugitive - a matter of absences and uncertainties. The wandering womb, in short, is a fitting emblem for classical women's most unclassical status, and *Heroines and Hysterics* mirrors its subject matter by stressing the (probably permanent) fragmentation and indirection of our knowledge about them.

In this, it's very different from Sarah Pomeroy's aggressive analysis of misogyny, and also from Sir Ken-

neth Dover's book, *Greek Homosexuality*, of four years ago. Dover was able to be robustly demystifying: homosexuality was elaborately tied in with all aspects of cultural life, and had complex rules and mores (for example, that "nice" boys didn't enjoy it - in many ways he produced an almost Victorian picture), and our ignorance was a matter of our own repressions. Even he, however, was defeated when it came to women - "That female homosexuality and the attitude of women to male homosexuality can both be discussed within one part of one chapter reflects the paucity of women writers and artists in the Greek world and the virtual silence of male writers and artists on these topics." The more we investigate, the less, it almost seems, there is to look at.



"Standing woman" and "Aphrodite binding sandal" from Morgantina Studies, Volume 1, The Terracottas by Malcolm Bell (22pp with 130 plates. Princeton University Press. £38.70. 0 691 03946 1).

Ms Lefkowitz would not put it quite so strongly. Not all her heroines are hysterics. None the less she insists, with her own brand of stoicism, that the visible women are experts in passive suffering:

the *Ilad* ends not with a description of debate or of battle, but with funeral lamentations of Hector's kinswomen. His wife Andromache... talks of the life she will lead as a slave, and suggests that her son will also be enslaved or even killed by the Achaeans; his mother, Hecuba, speaks of Achilles' brutality, and of the other sons that he killed; Helen tells of his kindness, when all others reproached her. So the epic ends with reflection on the fate of the victims, not of the victors of the famous war... the women who cannot take action for themselves have the last words.

These women on the sidelines stand somewhere between audience and actors, and - perhaps - between actors and the "forces beyond man's control" that the epics and the tragedies seek to encounter; precisely because they "endure the consequences of the action in the arena," they are best able to interpret its meaning, and, as survivors, to demonstrate its consequences. A woman's view of the action is essentially heroic. For Ms Lefkowitz, the tragic heroines who break the rules, like Antigone ("I am not a man," says Creon, "she is a man if she can have this power without suffering"), actually prove the rule. The moments from tragedy that she peculiarly savours are those when women demonstrate their exclusion from the action, as in Euripides' *Andromache*: She has taken refuge at Thetis' shrine, along with her son, Neoptolemus. Neoptolemus' wife Hermione... wants to murder her. But because both she, and Andromache are women, they must wait for their male relatives to arrive on the scene before anything can happen.

Women encounter the impossible (or the inevitable) at almost every step,

and so, in a sense, arrive by a nasty short cut at the end of wisdom, without the heroic delusions of the real actors. Euripides seems so convinced of "traditional dangers" that in his work women's passive heroism sometimes becomes the model for men.

It will be seen that this is a double-edged argument. Ms Lefkowitz admires Penelope's virtues ("weaving, deceiving, indecision") and finds even in Sappho a predilection for "the special weapons of the oppressed, miracles and patience"; and her own strategies are similarly underhand. Active heroism (when was it anything else from the point of view of the chorus?) is dangerous, crassly public behaviour. On the sidelines, we at least know we live marginally, precariously, provisionally.

In classics... married men write significantly more books and articles than unmarried men, or unmarried women, and married women, with a few exceptions, write the fewest of all.

The wry conclusion being that higher education has merely postponed marriage and children, for women; and that acquiring wives, or at least the support of communities of women, starts to look like the only (provisional) answer.

This is a thought which has increasingly occurred to feminists over the last decade. The notion of separate spheres, once a betrayal into marginality, has taken on a new, and newly embittered, relevance. Ms Lefkowitz doesn't sound particularly bitter, it's true, but her continued insistence on the shadowy otherness of women's lives and meanings places her firmly in the tough-minded camp, as well as on an all-female campus. The book's two final essays - "On Becoming a Cow," "On Becoming a Tree" - set out the ground rules, as it were. They are both about translation, and translation seen most radically as metaphorical - a traumatic, infinitely problematic change of state. The "cow" is to be in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound*, horribly deformed into a fly-bitten heifer by her union with Zeus. Her deformity is the result of the war that cannot be fought - a literally intestine battle; she is indeed hysterical, schizophrenic. Translators, Ms Lefkowitz argues, have nearly always diminished her paradox by turning the chorus's description of her sexual terror into a familiar idiom - "What will become of me?" Whereas I should read "What should I become?" or even, "Who should I become?" Only Gilbert Murray (perhaps, she suggests, because he was writing "during the years when women in England achieved... political equality") did his tragedy some justice with the words, "I know not how I should be changed." For the most part, our translations have decently veiled our translation into a female animal: "Union with Zeus has dire consequences. Marriage even to a mortal, with its usual consequence of pregnancy, inevitably involves physical transformation."

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In classics... married men write significantly more books and articles than unmarried men, or unmarried women, and married women, with a few exceptions, write the fewest of all.

The wry conclusion being that higher education has merely postponed marriage and children, for women; and that acquiring wives, or at least the support of communities of women, starts to look like the only (provisional) answer.

This is a thought which has increasingly occurred to feminists over the last decade. The notion of separate spheres, once a betrayal into marginality, has taken on a new, and newly embittered, relevance. Ms Lefkowitz doesn't sound particularly bitter, it's true, but her continued insistence on the shadowy otherness of women's lives and meanings places her firmly in the tough-minded camp, as well as on an all-female campus. The book's two final essays - "On Becoming a Cow," "On Becoming a Tree" - set out the ground rules, as it were. They are both about translation, and translation seen most radically as metaphorical - a traumatic, infinitely problematic change of state. The "cow" is to be in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound*, horribly deformed into a fly-bitten heifer by her union with Zeus. Her deformity is the result of the war that cannot be fought - a literally intestine battle; she is indeed hysterical, schizophrenic. Translators, Ms Lefkowitz argues, have nearly always diminished her paradox by turning the chorus's description of her sexual terror into a familiar idiom - "What will become of me?" Whereas I should read "What should I become?" or even, "Who should I become?" Only Gilbert Murray (perhaps, she suggests, because he was writing "during the years when women in England achieved... political equality") did his tragedy some justice with the words, "I know not how I should be changed." For the most part, our translations have decently veiled our translation into a female animal: "Union with Zeus has dire consequences. Marriage even to a mortal, with its usual consequence of pregnancy, inevitably involves physical transformation."

Ms Lefkowitz would not put it quite so strongly. Not all her heroines are hysterics. None the less she insists, with her own brand of stoicism, that the visible women are experts in passive suffering:

the *Ilad* ends not with a description of debate or of battle, but with funeral lamentations of Hector's kinswomen. His wife Andromache... talks of the life she will lead as a slave, and suggests that her son will also be enslaved or even killed by the Achaeans; his mother, Hecuba, speaks of Achilles' brutality, and of the other sons that he killed; Helen tells of his kindness, when all others reproached her. So the epic ends with reflection on the fate of the victims, not of the victors of the famous war... the women who cannot take action for themselves have the last words.

These women on the sidelines stand somewhere between audience and actors, and - perhaps - between actors and the "forces beyond man's control" that the epics and the tragedies seek to encounter; precisely because they "endure the consequences of the action in the arena," they are best able to interpret its meaning, and, as survivors, to demonstrate its consequences. A woman's view of the action is essentially heroic. For Ms Lefkowitz, the tragic heroines who break the rules, like Antigone ("I am not a man," says Creon, "she is a man if she can have this power without suffering"), actually prove the rule. The moments from tragedy that she peculiarly savours are those when women demonstrate their exclusion from the action, as in Euripides' *Andromache*: She has taken refuge at Thetis' shrine, along with her son, Neoptolemus. Neoptolemus' wife Hermione... wants to murder her. But because both she, and Andromache are women, they must wait for their male relatives to arrive on the scene before anything can happen.

Women encounter the impossible (or the inevitable) at almost every step,

# Visions and revisions

By Walter Laqueur

VICTOR ROTHWELL:  
*Britain and the Cold War 1941-1947*  
 551pp. Cape. £16.  
 0 224 01478 1

KENNETH W. THOMPSON:  
*Cold War Theories*  
 Volume 1: World Polarization, 1943-1953  
 216pp. Louisiana State University Press. £11.40.  
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JOHN LEWIS GADDIS:  
*Strategies of Containment*  
 A Critical Appraisal of Post-War American National Security Policy  
 432pp. Oxford University Press. £13.25.  
 0 19502 944 5

One of the charms of history is that it is rewritten from time to time, but it is dangerous to overdo it. The French Revolution has been subjected to changing interpretations and many books have been written for and against Napoleon, as we know from Peter Geyl. All this is perfectly legitimate, but if someone were to argue that Napoleon was the leading advocate and practitioner of pacifism in his time he would invite ridicule. It is one thing to admire Stalin, it is another to depict him as a great humanist whose sole aspiration was to cooperate with the West in a spirit of goodwill, peace and mutual benefit.

The inability to accept the permissible limits of rewriting history was the undoing of the Cold War revisionists, a school which had many sympathizers in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For a while this was the new orthodoxy; in Europe, however, it was always less influential among professional historians for the simple reason that Europe was not involved in the Vietnam war. It proponents argued that the aggressive West was mainly (if not entirely) to blame for the break-up of the wartime alliance and the Cold War, whereas Stalin stood for close political and economic collaboration with his allies. If he expanded a little the borders of the Soviet Union in various directions, this was done partly in a fit of absent-mindedness, partly because the Soviet Union suffered from deep-seated feelings of insecurity, and above all, because he was provoked by the hostile actions of the Western warmongers. In short, according to this school of thought, Stalin was not an actor but merely a reactor.

Cold War revisionism focused only on one side in the post-war conflict, namely on America. There was no interest in re-examining Soviet foreign policy. The result was entertaining, for it resembled a boxing-match in which the spectators see only one of the fighters; they watch him attacking, retreating, punching, counter-punching, feinting; but since the other contestant is never visible the whole exercise appears ludicrous.

Furthermore, even with regard to United States and British policy, the picture was sadly deficient, for a great deal of essential source material has been accessible only since about 1975. But by that year all the major revisionist studies had already been written. Thus, in retrospect, a decade of Cold War revisionist historiography had much the same impact on serious scholarship as two other revisionist doctrines - the Hitler-stumbled-into-the-war school and the Pearl Harbor-as-Roosevelt's-fault school - which is to say, precisely nothing: it is one thing to argue that the Western allies before 1939, and Roosevelt in 1940-41, made mistakes, or that the Western powers occasionally misjudged the Soviet Union in 1945-48. But in all three cases the conflict would have been inevitable even if the West had acted with much greater wisdom and committed not a single error. The late Gordon W. Prange in his monumental study of Pearl Harbor, *At Dawn We Slept*, wrote apropos of the revisionist arguments that no one who had examined the great mass of

historical evidence could doubt that the United States wanted to maintain peace with Japan for as long as possible. The same is true, *grosso modo*, with regard to France and Britain up to and including 1938. It also applies to United States and British foreign policy in 1945 and after. Indeed, if the Western powers had been less hesitant in their advance towards Berlin and Prague in the spring of 1945, or if they had not demobilized in record time once the war ended, some of the major complications of the post-war period might never have arisen.

For a number of years these controversial facts were all but lost in a fog of obfuscation. Of late this has changed: V. Mastny's *Russia's Road to the Cold War* (1979) helped to clear up some of the confusion; Victor Rothwell's study, as well as Roy Douglas's book published last year, should finish the job. It is the great merit of Rothwell's book that it combines massive research into the Foreign Office records with lucid analysis. There are long and usually very interesting excerpts from minutes, not only by the wartime and post-war leaders but also by their middle-level officials at the time, men such as Frank Roberts, Christopher Watson, Oliver Harvey, Pierson Dixon, Orme Sargent and William Strang. Their assessments and also their misjudgments provide a fascinating running commentary on West-East relations. There were, of course, differences of opinion between them but this was true more of the period prior to 1945 than thereafter. Up to late 1944 it was widely believed that the Soviet Union wanted security, that she suffered from a "traditional inferiority complex" and that she should be treated with "infinite patience". As Geoffrey Wilson argued, reserve and suspicion were so ingrained in the Russian character as to be excusable. True, some sceptics thought that the Soviet Union harboured more far-reaching ambitions, and that she would penetrate deep into Europe. But even these worst case analysts talked only about the "encirclement" of Poland and the "closest possible collaboration with Czechoslovakia". Doubts had become more widespread by the time the war ended, and after 1946 they were fairly general. As Austin Higham noted: "If the British public continues to harbour the illusion that we have only to get to know the Russians better to find that they are the same sort of fellows we are, then the British public is in for some painful shocks."

But Eden, and after him Bevin, continued to exercise great patience, denouncing any talk about "anti-Soviet groupings". Churchill and Eden were increasingly impatient with the Poles dreaming their dreams of independence. Bevin continued to believe for a long time after the war that the Russians could and should be appeased. Attlee, as it appears from the records, was far more sceptical in this respect.

By late 1945 disillusionment with the Russians was widespread among American diplomats in Eastern Europe, but this was by no means true of the State Department, which tried very hard to "mediate" between the Soviet Union and Britain. According to a note written at the time by Frank Roberts, some American diplomats believed that the Soviet leadership was divided into two groups over the issue of relations with the West - "hawks" and "doves" as we would say now - and that it would pay to make unilateral concessions so as to strengthen the doves in the Kremlin. (Forty years later the theory still has some advocates in Washington.) When George Kennan returned from the United States to Moscow in October 1945 he told a British colleague (according to British sources) that he had found a sharp distinction at home between, on the one hand, officials and academics, and on the other, well-to-do women who dabbled in politics and who nursed a guilty conscience about America's treatment of the Soviet Union over the years. Lord

Hankey commented, "I wish the failure to recognize the need for patient firmness was confined to well-to-do American women who dabbled in politics. Unfortunately this is not the case. But I think that under Molotov's able and truly remarkable tuition we are all learning a thing or two this year." Hankey overrated Molotov's ability as a teacher, or perhaps some of the pupils were slower in the uptake than he expected. Even in early 1947 Bevin was willing to make one-sided concessions to the Russians in order to induce them to take part in the Marshall Plan; in a speech to the Labour Party in 1947 there was not a word of criticism of the Soviet Union. By then virtually all his advisers had reached the conclusion that, as Brimelow put it, "our concessions would be accepted without gratitude and used against us".

Victor Rothwell's important study breaks fresh ground, whereas Kenneth Thompson tries to accommodate conflicting viewpoints and to provide a new synthesis. His work has an almost Hegelian quality: the "orthodox" historians constituted the thesis, the "revisionists" supplied the antithesis, and now the time has come for a detached, objective overview, the synthesis. Revisionist historians, he writes, have become a "significant, articulate and influential scholarly group" providing a healthy corrective to orthodox historiography. True, they have no monopoly of historical truth, and in the last resort they are guilty of error similar to those committed by the orthodox historians, however much they inveigh against each other. "Each group portrays a major political system as being driven by a deterministic force beyond its control. Each identifies an expansionist dynamic at work which makes conflict inevitable. Each views one set of decision makers as driven by an ideology which blinds them to responsible political judgment." This is a very decent, gentlemanly approach, and indeed Thompson writes elsewhere of legitimate differences of opinion between men of good will. He quotes Robert Jervis's study of attitudes and misperceptions in international politics. Perhaps it was all a giant misunderstanding, a matter of mutual fears and national insecurity, "part of the basic security power dilemma as each sees in the other not only a potential menace but because of misperception an active and diabolical enemy".

It is a noble effort but, alas, it cannot possibly come off. There are, of course, misperceptions in international affairs but they are much more infrequent than the genuine conflicts. Hitler's decision to dominate Europe did not stem from cognitive failure, nor do the conflicts between the Soviet Union and China, between the Arabs and Israel, between India and Pakistan, and so on. Even in Czechoslovakia in 1968, in Afghanistan and more recently, in Poland were not rooted in misperceptions. Even the outbreak of the First World War, the favourite example of the "perceptualists", had only to a limited degree to do with perceptions of hostility and threat. Thompson, who lived through the post-war period, pauses every now and then and, in the middle of paying respect to the revisionists, realizes that he is dealing with mythology not reality. From his own experience he remembers that the Russians did not want war but only the fruits of war, and that an equilibrium of strength was needed in Europe. And so Thompson concludes that, "knowing what

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## American Studies Bibliography

we know today, we cannot but view  
with surprise the sharp reaction to  
Churchill's historic speech".

In the end, nothing much remains  
of the "synthesis". Thompson lived  
through the 1930s and 1940s, and  
should thus have recalled that people  
may be "significant, articulate, and  
influential" and yet totally wrong.  
Perhaps he should have refreshed his  
memory by using contemporary  
Soviet and East European sources,  
and above all the American intelligence  
reports which have been accessible  
now for the past few years. Had he  
done so, a different picture would  
have emerged: far from stooping up  
the Cold War, Central Intelligence  
and State Department intelligence  
took an almost consistently benign  
view of Soviet intentions. In  
September 1947, the CIA, in the first  
issue of its top-secret "Review of the  
World Situation", held that the  
Soviet Union was unlikely to resort  
to open military aggression as  
circumstances then stood. In February  
1948 it was reported that the  
European Communist parties (with Soviet  
approval) were retreating to electoral  
processes and that there was a  
chance that the Kremlin was "revising  
its policy and seeking an accommo-  
dation with the West". It was  
believed that the Soviet Union was  
abandoning violent action in favour  
of parliamentary practices because it  
wanted to bolster the Communist  
vote in the forthcoming Czechoslovak  
elections. It should have been clear  
that the Communists had no such  
intention, following their negative  
experiences in Hungary. Five  
days after the publication of the CIA  
assessment, with the forced resigna-  
tion of the non-Communist ministers  
in Prague, the coup took place which  
was to prove a turning point in post-  
war European history.

American intelligence assessment  
of the Berlin blockade, too, was any-  
thing but alarmist; on the contrary,  
once the blockade had ended in May  
1949 there were visions of détente.  
The Soviet Union, it was believed,  
had two basic alternatives: to enter  
negotiations in an attempt to delay  
and confuse Western policy; or to  
attempt to reach an agreement that  
would remove Germany as a bone of  
contention and to arrive at a détente.  
The CIA analysts saw the second  
choice as the more likely; unfortu-  
nately Stalin did not, and thus a year  
later the United States was again  
taken by surprise, this time in Korea.  
(It should be noted that when the  
Korean war broke out the CIA, that  
Cold War monster par excellence,  
counted all in all 302 staff members  
and its budget amounted to about  
four million dollars.) In short, far  
from engaging in the relentless pur-  
suit of the Cold War, America, as so  
often in its history, was altogether  
unprepared.

It is true that after 1950 there was  
a manic-depressive trend in United  
States foreign policy. Having mis-  
judged Stalin's intentions for so long,  
policy-makers tended to over-react.  
With the outbreak of the Korean war  
the estimates suddenly changed.  
From now on a "grave danger of  
war" was seen which would last for  
at least four years and which would  
be at its most serious two years  
thence. Scenarios referred to simu-  
taneous Soviet attacks all over the  
globe. These figures and scenarios  
have become something of a joke in  
retrospect. But all this does not  
change the essential fact, that  
Washington was very slow to under-  
stand events in Europe. As Robert  
Solomon, at that time a young Ameri-  
can diplomat in Budapest, wrote:  
"For months we were regarded by  
Russophobes as the most dangerous  
and our reporting was discredited."  
Time has come to reassess the US  
foreign policy during the first decade  
after the war in the light of over-  
sanguine hopes and of panicky re-  
sponses. But this is something quite  
different from Thompson's attempt  
at a "synthesis". His well-meant  
disavowal comes in any case several  
years too late. Some revisionists have  
since admitted that their views were  
wrong, or at the very least one-sided,  
some have disavowed from this  
field of study, and the trend as a  
whole is no longer fashionably except  
as an article of faith among some  
political fringe groups.

John Lewis Gaddis has written about  
the Cold War before, he now  
provides an authoritative survey of



On the eve of Pearl Harbor: Kichisaburo Nomura, Japanese Ambassador to the United States (left), with Secretary of State Cordell Hull (centre) and Saburo Kurusu, Japan's special envoy for a "final attempt at peace", arriving at the White House on November 17, 1941. From the book referred to on the previous page, Gordon W. Prange's *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (873pp, Michael Joseph, £14.95, 0 7181 20906) which will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

how America's post-war strategy of  
containment developed from George  
Kennan's famous "long telegram"  
and NSC-68, via Eisenhower's "New  
Look" and the Kennedy-Johnson  
"flexible response", to the Nixon-  
Kissinger détente and beyond. It is  
an intelligent, sensible study and the  
author makes good use of presiden-  
tial and other government papers  
that have been declassified in recent  
years.

Several basic patterns emerge: that  
despite his public rhetoric, Dulles  
was a more subtle and skilful diplo-  
mat than he is usually given credit  
for; that Eisenhower, with all his  
sterling qualities, was not the politi-  
cal genius depicted by latter-day re-  
visionists; and, above all, that some-  
thing was basically amiss with the  
strategy of containment from the be-  
ginning. In that it emphasized mili-  
tary affairs, to the detriment of po-  
litical and economic aspects, in short,  
containment never really became a  
proper strategy but always remained  
a general assessment of the situation.  
Even the stress on military measures  
was largely rhetorical; allocations for  
defence went down from 21 per cent  
of the GNP in 1946 to 4.6 per cent in  
1950 - hardly "proof" that official  
Washington was serious about the  
Soviet threat and the "building of  
situations of strength".

The same pattern, by and large,  
prevailed in later years. The basic  
purpose of a strategy is to differenti-  
ate between vital and peripheral in-  
terests. For, as Dean Acheson put it,  
"We cannot scatter our shots equally  
over the world. We just have not  
enough shots to do that." Yet, until  
the 1970s no serious attempt was  
made to define United States in-  
terests in the world and to establish a  
set of priorities, and even then it was  
done in a rather vague way. "Metri-  
cal containment" (to use Gaddis's  
term), ie, resistance to aggression  
all over the globe, led to Korea and  
Vietnam, to frustration, exhaus-  
tion and worse. Asymmetrical con-  
tainment, ie, selective containment  
or containment minus, on the other  
hand, provided no guarantees that  
peripheral challenges to the balance  
of power might not become major  
ones. There is no easy way out of  
this dilemma: for the power of the  
United States is not unlimited, and  
means and ends have to be adjusted.

Mr Gaddis expresses surprise about  
the primacy that has been accorded  
to domestic economic con-  
siderations in shaping strategies of  
containment "to the exclusion of  
other considerations" (author's  
italics). This is only too true, for Un-

ited States foreign policy has been  
dictated to a large extent by pa-  
rietal concerns. This has been its fun-  
damental weakness all along and it is  
as true today as it was in the late  
1940s. How, then, are we to explain  
that containment has been, after all,  
a "surprisingly successful strategy"?  
(This statement seems to be more  
correct with regard to Europe than  
the rest of the world.) The answer  
surely is that the Soviet Union has  
also had to face major difficulties,  
though of a totally different kind,  
that the United States was not alone  
in the world but had allies, and that  
the decades since the end of the  
Second World War have been a  
period of unprecedented economic  
progress for the Western world.  
There seem to be rougher seas ahead  
for both sides in the years to come,  
and it remains to be seen which will  
be better equipped to cope with  
coming storms.

Gaddis's excellent study seems  
open to criticism on two counts: now-  
days the production of a book takes  
about a year - very much in contrast  
to the period of the American and French  
revolutions when Burke and Paine saw  
their books through the press in a few  
weeks - and for this reason, if for no  
other, authors should not even try to be  
up-to-date in their comments. Gaddis  
gets a little excited about the vacilla-  
tions and weaknesses of the late Carter  
years; he is perfectly correct in what he  
says, but even at a distance of only  
twelve months the subject seems no  
longer of overwhelming importance.

My other reservation concerns the  
preface. Is it really necessary to regis-  
ter debts to intellectual concepts or  
fashions, even when the connections  
are not obvious? Hardly a historical  
study is published these days without  
a bow in the direction of cognitive  
dissonance, structuralism, psycho-  
history, etc, as if the authors were  
ashamed to sail under their own flag. In  
Gaddis's case it happens to be the  
"operational code", the notion that the  
conduct of politicians (and others) is  
based on a set of assumptions about the  
world, formed early on in their careers,  
which governs their behaviour after-  
wards. I am not at all sure how helpful  
the concept has been in guiding Mr  
Gaddis: changes of attitude towards  
the Soviet Union, rather than con-  
sistency, have been the rule as far as  
America's policy makers are con-  
cerned. This has been true of every  
president since Truman (with the  
possible exception of Johnson). It was  
especially so with regard to Nixon, and  
even when considering the record of  
President Reagan one has to distin-

guish between rhetoric and action.

## Total ellipse

By Colin Greenland

BRIAN ALDISS:  
*Helliconia Spring*  
Hellelconia Spring  
361pp, Cape, £6.95.  
0 224 01843 4

"To comprehend fully what I tell  
you", cries Vry, who has put know-  
ledge before comfort and educated  
herself above the standard of her  
tribe, "you must first understand and  
then grasp the understanding with  
your imagination, so that the facts  
live." Vry's words describe exactly  
what Brian Aldiss's latest novel is  
about and how it came to be written.  
The fact that Vry's lecture is sup-  
posed to be pacifying a bloodthirsty  
mob demonstrates that understand-  
ing does get out of hand now and  
then, even when the imagination has  
an iron grip.

*Helliconia Spring* is the first yield  
of four years' work which will  
eventually produce a trilogy of the  
seasons on Aldiss's imaginary world.  
Originally the project included an  
encyclopedia, like Borges's of Tlon,  
with entries by experts on every  
aspect of Helliconia from astronomy  
to zoology; but the usual vagaries of  
publishing intervened, leaving Aldiss  
to do the whole job himself in fic-  
tion, with the scientists as consul-  
tants. We can be glad it turned out  
in the way it did. As the subject of  
an encyclopedia, however weighty,  
Helliconia would have seemed a  
magnificent pastime, self-enclosed,  
self-referential, an irresistible snare  
for those who have begun to tire of  
"Dungeons and Dragons" or  
elementary Elvish. As a novel, its life  
brims over into our own.

There is one major difference,  
though, between Helliconia and our  
own planet: its solar system has been  
captured by a second, far larger star,  
around which it travels in an ex-  
tremely low ellipse. The Great Year  
of Helliconia lasts 2,592 Earth years:  
the planet orbits for empires to come  
and go, and to forget how the cli-  
mate has altered. As Helliconia  
swings away from the white super-

giant Freyr, the glaciers mobilize  
again and the high civilization of  
summer is obliterated by ice and  
snow. Aldiss uses a device customary  
in science fictional history: after  
catastrophic change, the science of  
the ancestors supplies the myths and  
legends of their descendants. The  
winter races retain only a dim con-  
viction that the Ancients used to be  
able to work stone and metal and fly  
through the air; but that was before  
the Fall. The cycles of suns, earth  
and stars are recorded as battles and  
alliances of gods. "These legends car-  
ried reality within them, as a flower  
bulb carries the flower within its  
flesh. So humans knew without  
knowing that they knew." Shapes in  
the imagination endure, but under-  
standing has gone.

Knowledge and power preside  
over the book like another dubious  
binary star. The novel opens amid  
chaos and night, in the depths of  
winter, when starving hunters trail  
migrating herds. The boy Yuli has  
the wits to escape when his father is  
captured by phagors, an enigmatic  
and bestial people (designed, Aldiss  
says, in homage to Michael Ayrton's  
miserable, mulevolent minotours).  
Yuli takes refuge in Pannoval, a  
cave-city under mountain, where  
all knowledge and power are vested  
in the priesthood. Growing up, Yuli  
enters holy orders, seeking an  
answer to the mystery of existence,  
but renounces his vows and runs  
away when he finds that the priests  
hold knowledge subordinate to faith,  
prohibiting thought and discovery.  
Yuli and his companions found the  
enlightened community of Embrud-  
dock, about which the rest of this  
volume circles, observing its growth,  
its changes, and especially the adven-  
tures of its people. As a Lord of  
Embruddock lies dying, another  
priest asks Yuli's great-grandson,  
"Which do you want more, power  
or knowledge?" The boy  
stares at the floor. "Both, sir... or  
whichever comes easier."

Aoz Roon the hunter assumes the  
succession, but his reign is a running  
battle with Shay Tal, the woman he  
loves, who insists on staying apart  
from him to pursue her craft of sor-

cery as it moves across the threshold  
into science. The drama of female  
emancipation begins early in this  
society: Shay Tal opens an academy  
for women dedicated to reviving  
knowledge through archaeology and  
empiricism. Aoz Roon is opposed to  
the academy. He sees temporal power  
as a matter of taming horses,  
securing territory, setting up lines of  
control and communication. Vry,  
Shay Tal's successor, studies to pre-  
dict the eclipses which terrify the  
tribe. Raynil Layan, who reinvents  
money, tells Vry he loves her for her  
mind as well as her body: "I believe  
that knowledge can be wedded to  
power to reinforce it." Aldiss depicts  
this ominous, familiar wedding of  
commerce and science in one bril-  
liant scene where Vry accepts  
Raynil's line of seduction by using  
his new coins to demonstrate how  
Helliconia orbits its suns.

*Helliconia Spring* is epic science  
fiction, in the traditional sense of a  
narrative of vast historical scope  
which focuses on the trials and  
achievements of individuals. Embrud-  
dock passes through the archetypal  
phases - a heroic age, a pastoral  
interlude, the establishment of agri-  
culture, technology, and trade. Classi-  
cal and Biblical precedents abound,  
though this is less the story of a  
chosen race than the epic of an en-  
tire ecology, from volcano to virus,  
growing ever more active and in-  
teractive as the environment warms  
up. In the icy fogs of the opening  
pages, Helliconia is "not so much a  
world as a place awaiting formal  
creation", which Aldiss works hard  
to provide. His structural sense, the  
grasp of imagination on understand-  
ing, does slip sometimes, and this  
results in a plot which is overper-  
dured on coincidence and overbur-  
dened with slabs of undigested sci-  
ence. On the whole, however, Aldiss  
manages splendidly the role of SF's  
latest Pancreator - a role most re-  
cently played by Robert Silverberg  
and before him Frank Herbert. What  
qualifies Aldiss for the job is not  
only his varied literary experience,  
but also his intelligence, inventiveness,  
and inveterate fondness for hu-  
man beings however benighted.

## Life at the bottom

By David Profumo

ANDRÉ JUTE:  
*Sinkhole*

298pp, Seeker and Warburg, £7.50.  
0 436 22982 X

Readers of the future who borrow  
this book from one of those libraries  
which divest volumes of their dust-  
jackets on arrival will be deprived of  
a nicely ironical image of the world  
that *Sinkhole* depicts: a photograph  
of a car that has tumbled into a pit  
caused by subsidence in an American  
town. As, both the subtitle, "A  
tragedy of the machine age", and the  
author's prefatory observations un-  
ambiguously insist, this is the po-  
sition the West can expect to find  
itself in as a consequence of its ex-  
cessive dependence on the possession  
of oil.

The novel describes what happens  
when an area measuring forty blocks  
in an American city one day dis-  
appears - a thousand feet under-  
ground, trapping a handful of sur-  
vivors among the rubble and numerous  
corpses in its crater. It transpires that  
the government has over the years  
been acquiring clandestine supplies of  
oil from abroad and pumping them  
into the country's own exhausted  
fields, creating strategic reserves.  
However, the oil's natural qualities  
have caused it to seep away from  
these subterranean reservoirs, and it  
has eaten its way underground to  
the heart of the city, thereby causing  
the disaster.

The jacket photograph is aptly  
chosen; it is a much-emphasized  
vision of Jute's that the demands of  
the internal combustion engine are

dictating the way humans treat their  
environment, and the disaster shapes  
a warning that such an obsession  
could result in civilization being quite  
literally undermined by it. There is a  
further connection with the plot: the  
pictured car is a Porsche, and Quirk,  
the first character we meet, is a  
millionaire renowned for his moun-  
taineering exploits, who has made his  
fortune from dealing in Porsche-Audi  
vehicles. There is therefore particular  
justice in the fact that he should be  
one of the enterprising heroes who  
subsequently circumvent the urban  
authorities and mount a daring re-  
cue operation.

Such a fantastic drama inevitably  
has affinities with disaster-movies; in  
this case, an up-ended version of *The  
Towering Inferno*. The filmic dimen-  
sion is introduced when we encoun-  
ter in rapid succession a number of  
characters who are converging on the  
centre of the city with various aims,  
as if in a set of title-sequences that  
act as prologue to the crisis. For  
addicts of television films there will  
be a vague familiarity about some of  
Jute's cast: a self-important senator,  
a brilliant young fireman, a rich and  
attractive surgeon and his beautiful  
black nurse. Such representative  
types from American sagas seem im-  
possibly alien to anyone who lives in  
Britain, but that is the source of  
their fascination, as in those films in  
which Dr Smith, the awaited special-  
ist in an obscure branch of marine  
biology, turns out to be a glamorous  
blonde. Jute's band of survivors is a  
judicious mixture of such individuals  
and more ordinary specimens, and  
the collision between them accounts  
for the most accessible element of  
the story - its study of humanist  
stress.

While hysterical and hamfistedness  
dictate the behaviour of those left up

on the surface, the world at the  
bottom of the crater is a microcosm  
of society at large. As in *Lord of  
The Flies*, some revert to primitivism  
- this is the case with The Saver, a  
group of religious enthusiasts led by  
a rapacious devotee from Wilkes-Barre,  
who grow through the rubble in  
search of sacrifices; more laudable  
qualities emerge in others. With its  
whirling darkness, screaming, and  
blinding wind, the crater becomes an  
inferno which puts all the survivors  
to the test. Jute pays uncompromis-  
ing attention to Bosch-like details of  
physical nastiness, and draws on im-  
ages from other studies in confine-  
ment and claustrophobia: a ruined  
department store is rifled for equip-  
ment like Crusoe's wreck; the bizarre  
atmospheric conditions and desolate  
urban geography recall science fic-  
tion novels about survivors of atomic  
holocausts.

However implausible the basic  
premise of the plot might appear,  
Jute has clearly conducted a great  
deal of research into everything he  
describes, much of it very technical.  
Occasionally this deteriorates into  
exhibitionism of a rather distracting  
kind, but in the main it has the effect  
of investing the novel with an air of  
prophecy. This prophetic aspect suf-  
fers, though, from authorial insist-  
ence that certain things are "peren-  
nially and dangerously true about  
human behaviour" and the novel as a  
whole labours its points. But its moral  
and ecological concerns are impor-  
tant ones, and Jute is evidently  
a man of very forceful opinions. In the  
note about him on the jacket we  
learn, for example, that he abhors  
"logging professors" of Eng. Lit. at  
provincial universities. If the dis-  
turbance predictions of *Sinkhole*  
should prove correct, that will be the  
way we shall all get around.

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## A scene in every number

By Jonathan Keates

ARLENE M. JACKSON:  
*Illustration and the Novels of Thomas  
Hardy*  
151pp. Macmillan. £15.  
0 333 32303 3

Literary illustration in the twentieth  
century has come to seem neces-  
sary, even impertinent. We no longer  
need or want pictures, and even if  
the resurgence of the professional  
illustrator for adult fiction is not in-  
conceivable, it is hard to imagine an  
Amis, a Murdoch or a Drabble  
accompanied with plates. Given the  
tendency of novelists from James  
Joyce to John Galsworthy to  
drawings for the Scott-Moncrieff  
translation) onwards to replace ac-  
tion with analysis, and the gradual  
disappearance in art of the represen-  
tational before the abstract and sym-  
bolic, it seems as if there is nothing  
left for the artist to work on or with.

It must already have looked a little  
like that during the 1870s, when  
Hardy's early novels began appearing.  
His extraordinary precision in detail,  
on which reviewers of *Far From The  
Madding Crowd* were quick to com-  
ment, was a good deal more helpful  
than the narrative methods of other  
contemporary novelists. Poor M. E.  
Edwards, for example, faced with  
Trollope's *The Claverings*, serialized  
in *The Cornhill* in 1867, could do  
little but pose the figures in photo-  
graphic attitudes of soulful anxiety  
against a blurred crosshatching  
emblematic of the writer's concentra-  
tion of interest on character as  
opposed to surroundings. "If authors  
would learn a little how to draw  
themselves, they would not put such  
difficulties in the artist's way",  
George du Maurier plaintively noted  
in *The Magazine of Art*. "It would be  
a great boon if they could, however  
roughly, illustrate their own work."  
In *The Art Journal* Joseph Pennell  
vigorously disagreed: "The most aw-  
ful misfortune that may occur to an  
illustrator is to be compelled to use  
the photographs or sketches made by  
an author; here almost certain disas-  
ter awaits the artist."

Nothing so dreadful overtook  
Helen Paterson, pupil of Millais and  
Leighton, whose work Ruskin  
forgetfully termed "forever lovely"  
and who was modestly content to  
accept the author's hints in prepara-  
tion of her coolly accomplished  
plates for *Far From The Madding  
Crowd*. Hardy's readiness to consider  
her "the best illustrator I ever had"  
was determined by a wistful notion,  
developed years afterwards in a let-  
ter to Gosse, that had she not mar-  
ried William Allingham and he not  
been courting Emma Gifford "those  
two almost simultaneous weddings  
would have been one but for a stupid  
blunder of God Almighty." Her  
work has an amazing stylistic flexi-  
bility, contrasting a scene such as the  
shearing supper, showing Oak and  
the rustles in swirling pre-Raphaelite  
draperies amid Burne-Jonesian brier  
roses, with the naturalistic severity of  
the confrontation beside Fanny's  
corpse, where the compositional lines  
formed by the coffin and the con-  
torted shapes of Troy and Bathsheba  
are eloquently stark.

Hardy was not always so fortune-  
ate. *The Return of the Native*, re-  
jected by Leslie Stephen for *The  
Cornhill* because "the Eustacia-  
Damon-Thomasth triangle 'might  
develop into something dangerous  
for a family magazine'", found a slot  
in *Belgravia*: *A Magazine of Fashion  
and Amusement*, edited by Miss  
Bridson, author of *Lady Audley's  
Secret*. The chosen illustrator,  
Gerard Manley Hopkins's brother  
Arthur, was stymied by Hardy's  
changing concept of the heroine, and  
Arlene M. Jackson plausibly suggests  
that while the artist laboured with an  
earlier Eustacia (no Corbaccio con-  
nections and no resemblance to Sappho  
or Mrs Siddons, as in the Wessex  
Edition), her creator had already de-  
veloped the more vulnerable and  
complex figure of later versions.  
Hardy wanted her "more youthful in  
face, supple in figure, and, in gen-  
eral, with a little more roundness and  
softness than have been given her".

From Hopkins's Millaisian pencil she  
emerges as a combination of a Gir-  
ton bluestocking damsel with one of  
the rapturous maidens of *Palladis*.

An increasing concern with his  
illustrators' capacity to provide in-  
telligent visual glosses on crucial mo-  
ments in the narrative was enhanced  
for Hardy during composition of *The  
Trumpet Major* and *A Lodicean*.  
The plates in both books represent a  
suppressed cry for help from artists  
clearly incapable of overcoming the  
flaws inherent in the text. For the  
once, John Collier, a future R. A.  
and associate of Alma-Tadema, pro-  
vided what must be some of the  
worst engravings to any nineteenth  
century novel, with figures and pro-  
portions of an embarrassing inepti-  
tude. For the other George du  
Maurier resumed the uneasy part-  
nership which began four years pre-  
viously with *The Hand of Eshelbena*—  
"Think of the poor artist, please,  
and give me a scene in every num-  
ber, if you can". Those for whom Du  
Maurier is the archetypal chronicler  
of fads and fooleries in the High Art  
drawing rooms of 1870s *Punch* can  
scarcely view his Hardy illustrations  
without a sense of their ludicrous  
inappropriateness. His versions of  
Somerset and Paula, Lord Mount-  
clere and Eshelbena, fussy uphol-  
stered grotesques, are simply Edwin  
and Angelina and Mr and Mrs Pon-  
sonby de Tomkyns minus their ex-  
tended captions.

The London agent for Harper's,  
which serialized *A Lodicean*, noted  
that Du Maurier "owned up that he  
was better at working his own will in  
social satire rather than under the  
limitations of other people's stories".  
Fraught as it was, their collaboration  
cemented a friendship between artist  
and author, and taught Hardy a good  
deal more about the technical aspects  
of plate-making. Yet the experience  
seems, at the same time, to have put  
paid to any further direct contact  
with illustrators. He was apparently  
indifferent to the painstaking authen-  
ticity of Robert Barnes's work on  
*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, sym-  
pathetic though it invariably is to the  
unique nature of the story as an  
essay in rural history. Odder still was  
his lack of interest in the representa-  
tion of Tess, whose consignment to  
Hubert Herkimer and a team of  
three students in *The Graphic*'s 1891  
serialization seems like an ironic  
echo of her fate in the book.

There is a dramatic aptness in the  
sudden change of pictorial style  
marked by the Herkimer plates. The  
long Pre-Raphaelite shadow, extend-  
ing from the Maxon Tennison of  
1857 through the entire world of  
Victorian book illustration, has given  
place to a Parisian art school manner  
strongly influenced by Millet, Meis-  
sonnier and Rosa Bonheur. Tess  
among the bleeding pheasants be-  
comes a Norman *payenne*, and the  
implications of Herkimer's insidiously

## Nice one, Keats

By Mark Casserley

WILLIAM WALSH:  
*Introduction to Keats*  
150pp. Methuen. £7.95 (paperback,  
£3.25).  
0 416 30490 7

Any introduction to Keats has to  
reckon with the mythology surround-  
ing his life and to make his poetry,  
which some find repellent, fully pre-  
sented to a modern reader. In William  
Walsh's view, in order to understand  
its significance the student has to  
respond to Keats's work as a unity,  
"in a purely educative experience".

The organization of the book is  
consistent with an understanding of  
Keats's career as "a brilliant, pro-  
found and exemplary exercise in self-  
education". It begins with "the open-  
ing sensibility" then considers the  
early poetry, and goes on to discuss  
the poet's personal development.  
"The education of sensibility", draw-  
ing on an earlier article by Professor



"What an escape," he said.

An illustration by George du Maurier for Hardy's *A Lodicean*, which  
appeared in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, February 1881, from the  
book reviewed here. See also the review of an exhibition of work by  
another of Hardy's illustrators, Hubert van Herkimer, in *Commentary* on  
page 250.

erotic treatment of the meeting with  
Alec at the fire, lodge the novel  
firmly in a kind of Daudet-Maupas-  
sant world far removed, as its early  
critics noted, from the family read-  
ership of the serial magazines.

Dr Jackson's survey, the first to  
tackle this fascinating subject, shows  
a refreshing determination to under-  
line its significance not merely in  
connection with Hardy but with the  
whole field of Victorian fiction from  
Dickens onwards. She draws our  
attention to Pre-Raphaelite influence  
in asserting the primacy of emblem-  
atic detail as an aid to the reader in  
search of signals from the narrative,  
and convincingly suggests that a

reasonably competent artist could ex-  
tend the life of a novel by elaborat-  
ing upon the descriptive touches  
offered by the writer. More might  
have been said of the effect of  
photography, simultaneously distur-  
bing and celebrating intimacy, and a  
wider sweep might have been made  
of comments by other novelists on  
the nature and degree of illustration.  
With its handsome batches of exam-  
ples and a detailed analysis of the art  
work in each of the major serializa-  
tions (*The Woodlanders*, published in  
*Macmillan's* was without plates of  
any sort) this is an outstanding con-  
tribution towards our appreciation of  
the links between the nineteenth cen-  
tury writer and reader.

judgments, especially on poems con-  
demned as derivative or immature,  
rather than attempt to show what is  
happening in them. The superiority  
of the late *Odes* over, say, *Endymion*  
is not in doubt, but the absence of  
sufficient explanatory material or cri-  
tical exegesis is likely to cause a  
flattening of the reader's response.

A literary reputation is the vector  
of competing myths. In this book  
Keats is being saved from the view  
that his achievement is flawed by the  
emotional self-indulgence of a "ver-  
styling pet-lamb". Walsh's particular  
emphasis may also result from a de-  
sire to correct a second attitude  
sensed in his potential audience: a  
first-blush infatuation with the musio-  
al in Keats, combined with senti-  
mentality about "his" sufferings.  
Another myth is, however, offered  
by this book, since the emphasis on  
Keats's heroic acceptance of personal  
misery and on his strenuousness of  
mind, as opposed to "modish literary  
chat", has its own appeal. All the  
same, the enthusiasm of Walsh's in-  
troduction may provoke readers into  
ransacking the bibliography for  
alternative approaches.

Walsh is also uncomfortable with  
softness and ambiguity in the poetry,  
and he prefers to deal out emphatic

## DESIGN

## Connoisseur of the contemporary

By Martin Pawley

REYNER BANHAM:  
*Design by Choice*  
Edited by Penny Sparke  
152pp. Academy Editions, 7 Holland  
Street, London, W8. £9.50.

Somewhere in his massive journalis-  
tic output for the year 1966 Reyner  
Banham wrote a piece about Formula  
One cars, with much use of  
phrases like "chassis design", "neg-  
ative corner", "scrub angle" and so  
on. Dennis Berry, then head of  
Kingston School of Architecture,  
wrote a letter pointing out some  
quite fundamental errors and offered  
corrections. In a defence published  
with Berry's letter, Banham re-  
marked that it was a great pleasure  
to receive a truly technical letter  
from a reader and not the usual  
"fuming cuckoo-spit". About the  
alleged errors he said not a word.

*Design by Choice* is a collection of  
thirty-one of the 397 articles Reyner  
Banham claims responsibility for  
over the past twenty-five years. It  
covers his progression as a writer on  
architecture and popular culture—  
from art historian to architectural  
historian to commentator to Ameri-  
canophile to expatriate—and con-  
tains some of the best as well as the  
most characteristic of his ephemera.  
Banham is still fifty-one per cent  
right in what he has written: "A  
Home is not a House" (1965) re-  
mains as brilliant as ever. But in-  
cluded, too, is "A Grid on two  
Ferlings" (1960), with its fatuous  
prophecy that the name of the in-  
ventor of the Moulton bicycle will join  
those of Bessemer, Panhard and  
Diesel in immortality. Other essays  
cover subjects as varied as Sant'Elia,  
Sunset Boulevard, Coventry  
Cathedral, Jaguars, Mustangs and  
Star Wars.

Banham knows that journalism is  
ephemeral but he does not quite  
believe it. "The misery of such writ-  
ing, when it is exactly on target, is to  
be incomprehensible by the time the  
next issue comes out", he notes with  
resignation in his foreword, but this  
world-weariness is soon succeeded by a  
hope that "one or two of his para-  
graphs" will prove in later years to have  
"distilled the essence of an epoch far  
better than subsequent scholarly stud-  
ies ever can". It is in any case difficult  
to generalize about his work. He  
himself claims to all magazines, and in

1967 thought it important to advise  
readers of *New Society* and "Peter  
Hall, wonder boy of English town  
planning, is about to buy a Ford  
Mustang to commute between London  
and Reading."

Cars indeed figure extensively in  
these pages, perhaps because they  
are a genuine fusion of heavy matter  
with expendability and fun. Banham  
clearly believes they are his forte  
and, truth to tell, he probably does  
know more about them than most  
Courtauld graduates, but his wisdom

and an American V-8 upon which he  
embarked in the pages of *Industrial  
Design* in 1960. Banham, of course,  
knows that Le Corbusier admired  
Ettore Bugatti's engines (at least he  
did in 1923), going so far as to  
illustrate one alongside the brier pipe  
and the Parthenon in the pantheon  
of *Vers une Architecture*. Banham  
also knows that purism, the idea that  
engineering evolves towards classic  
forms, is either wrong or at least  
operates over such an extended time  
scale that to claim any kind of clas-  
sical plateau in the 1920s is absurd.

especially if you are a former en-  
gineering apprentice from an aircraft  
company.

For a start Banham does not men-  
tion that the engine of the Type-41  
Bugatti illustrated in the article is a  
straight-eight with all its cylinders in  
line, which explains its two-dimen-  
sionality; nor does he identify the  
"haunting accessories" which it con-  
ceals and the V-8 reveals, or indeed  
adequately explain the fact that since  
both engines are totally enclosed  
when in use the "wild rhetoric of  
power" is reserved for the mechanic  
who changes the oil. It is, of course,  
true that the American V-8 has more  
accessories than the straight-eight of  
thirty years before: it has a belt-  
driven power steering pump and an  
air-conditioning compressor, but  
these innovations have nothing to do  
with Mondrian and Jackson Pol-  
lock, they are the result of technol-  
ogical evolution in the field of en-  
vironmental control (taming steering  
torque and keeping out the heat of  
the summer), which is after all a  
Banham subject par excellence. His  
1969 book *Architecture of the Well-  
Tempered Environment* deals with it  
at length. Odd that he should avoid  
a subject he does know something  
about in favour of one that he does  
not.

It is necessary to go into this sort  
of detail in order to come to grips  
with the issues raised by the articles  
in the present collection. If it seems  
picaresque, that is because it is:  
Banham was right much of the time,  
in any case. Surely, then, these  
errors are unimportant? Well, re-  
issuing them makes them less so than  
when they were buried in the incom-  
prehensibility of last week's issue. It  
may have been all right in 1967 to  
write about the amazing hulk, but  
today we all know he is incredible  
and repeating the error merely  
throws doubt upon all the other dis-  
tillations of the essence of the epoch  
in these pages.



Rambler Ambassador V8, 1960; from the book under review.

"handle heavy matters with light  
equipment", but his editor sees "ex-  
pendability" and "fun" as major  
themes. It is not just his peculiar judg-  
ment as mentioned in Banham's types  
and phrases like "Capitalist-type  
society", "internal subversion",  
"Nazi revanchism" and "the crisis of  
the adult education movement in the  
face of the Beatles" crop up from  
time to time; but he also writes  
knowingly of "handing a plump,  
drunk, amiable, unstable girl at a  
party" of "keeping abreast of Play-  
boy" (in the *Architect's Journal*, of

tends to be of the golf-club variety,  
long on generalizations and technical  
terms, short on engineering knowl-  
edge. It is not just his peculiar judg-  
ment as mentioned in Banham's types  
and phrases like "Capitalist-type  
society", "internal subversion",  
"Nazi revanchism" and "the crisis of  
the adult education movement in the  
face of the Beatles" crop up from  
time to time; but he also writes  
knowingly of "handing a plump,  
drunk, amiable, unstable girl at a  
party" of "keeping abreast of Play-  
boy" (in the *Architect's Journal*, of

Consequently his comparison be-  
long on generalizations and technical  
terms, short on engineering knowl-  
edge. It is not just his peculiar judg-  
ment as mentioned in Banham's types  
and phrases like "Capitalist-type  
society", "internal subversion",  
"Nazi revanchism" and "the crisis of  
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knowingly of "handing a plump,  
drunk, amiable, unstable girl at a  
party" of "keeping abreast of Play-  
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### Jonathan Cape

## commentary

### Success in an adopted country

By David Alexander

A Passion for Work  
Sir Hubert von Herkomer, 1849-1914  
Watford Museum

It is appropriate that the new Watford Museum, which is in the former Benskin's brewery house next to Watford High Street Station, should have Herkomer as the subject of its first art exhibition (until March 10). It was at nearby Bushey that Herkomer settled in his early twenties, at the period when he was making a living with realist illustrations for the *Graphic*. The young artist's attitude was coloured not only by the influence of German social realism, felt during a short period at the Munich Academy, but also by his own family's struggles in America and England after they had left Bavaria when he was a child. Unlike many of the elderly or distressed whom he depicted, Herkomer was able to do something about his poverty; 'a passion for work' was his own phrase and the exhibition gives a good idea of his energy and the range of his artistic activities.

Herkomer made his reputation with works such as 'The Last Muster' (RA 1875), a once-famous picture of Chelsea pensioners worked up from a *Graphic* sketch, and he continued to think of the recording of such scenes to be one of his major tasks. But he made his fortune with his portraits, soon fearing that he was being thought of as 'the painter of old men'. A selection of portraits is on display, which show, however, that he did not only use the subdued palette thought suitable for the distinguished. The museum has also borrowed two later realist pictures, 'Hard Times' and 'On Strike', which contrast with two pictures of village life for which social comment was not the motive.

Herkomer (the 'von' was granted by the Kaiser in 1899) acquired great love of the English countryside and among the surprises of the exhibition are his landscape studies in



Tess and Alec D'Urberville fighting the fire, one of Hubert Herkomer's illustrations for Tess of the D'Urbervilles, which was serialized in the *Graphic* in 1891. The picture is taken from illustration and the novels of Thomas Hardy, by Arlene M. Jackson, reviewed on page 258

watercolour and oils, some apparently made from the back of his Dalmatian after he took up motoring in 1903. But this was relaxation after the exhausting work of many years. In 1883 he had set up an art school at Bushey, which he was to run for just over twenty years; this is not covered in any detail, partly because the museum hopes to mount a separate exhibition in the future. He was also much engaged in printmaking, devising a process for steel-facing unprinted monotypes which he called Herkomergraving, and also for a short time in the production of enamels.

Much time, and even more money, was devoted to the building of his remarkable house in Bushey,

Lululand. This had an exterior based on designs by the American architect H. H. Richardson, and interiors created with the help of his craftsmen father and uncles. The house was demolished in the 1930s, after the local council refused to accept it; otherwise we might be seeing the present exhibition in there rather than in the slightly cramped surroundings of the Watford Museum.

After von Herkomer gave up the direction of the Bushey school in 1903 he was able to devote more time to writing and his two-volume *The Herkomers* appeared in 1910; the extreme self-confidence which this reveals was no doubt an important factor behind success in an

adopted country. A final interest shown by this versatile man was in making films, but none of his films appear to have survived.

Herkomer certainly deserves to be rescued from the obscurity which has been his fate. No special exhibition catalogue has been produced, but the Museum has instead compiled a book-let which includes a summary of his career, a list of the Museum's holdings of Herkomer material, and revealing essays on his debt to Fred Walker by Rosemary Treble and on his depiction of social subjects by Lee M. Edwards. *A Passion for Work* (56pp with 16 plates, 0 907958 00 1, £1 plus postage, 30p inland) is available from the Museum, 194 High Street, Watford, Herts.

paintings have none of the chaos found in the work of Dali, whose technique Frampton admired, but they are in their own way bizarre.

The friction between the isolated ingredients and the perfect design of the whole parallels Frampton's position in twentieth-century art. These paintings demonstrate his originality at the same time as they reveal his close connections with established society. Like an eighteenth-century hermit employed to live in the grove of a country-house estate, Frampton enjoyed licensed eccentricity, producing an art that stretched tradition without disturbing its foundations.

### Fifty years on...

claims of war, he is a romanticist caught in the toils of reality.

All these stories take place during the Black-and-Tan period and the later years of the irregular campaign. The title of the book indicates sufficiently Mr O'Faolain's mood of reaction. He shows as human nature distorted by political, religious and racial passions; he depicts objectively a mental world of distorted values, a world in which a cowardly murderer may pass as patriot while a sexual sin is regarded with sanctimonious horror. He deepens that sense of fantastic unreality which must always puzzle the thoughtful in a time of mob passions. His method depends upon abrupt character contrast; and the chances, the exigencies of guerrilla warfare, enable him to bring his characters together in totally unexpected situations. Nothing could be

more fantastic, for instance, than the setting of his story entitled 'The Small Lady'. ... Such a story as 'The Patriot' is more convincing, for the facts themselves are sufficiently fantastic; and this excellent sketch of a wandering band of irregulars, utterly without discipline or plan, lingers in the mind. In the title story, however, Mr O'Faolain justifies his experimental method: Heen, the aged libertine and aristocrat, is gunned by his decanter and steal his food, the betrayed girl - all these characters of a midsummer's night farce - are deftly realized, and in this remarkable fantasy the ideas of several generations meet; though fraught with ironic implications the story is told in a mood of pity and understanding.

## commentary

### An international affair

By Julian Symons

Reid  
Empire Cinema, Leicester Square

Jack Reed, born in 1887, was the nice American boy who turned Red before the colour became fashionable. A firmly respectable background in Portland, Oregon, education at Portland Academy, then Harvard - but at Harvard Reed showed interest in the Anarchist Club and Henry George's Single Tax theories. He was soon a radical journalist, enthralled by Big Bill Haywood and the 'Wobblies' (International Workers of the World) militants, excited by Pancho Villa and the Mexican Revolution of 1913, and happily blending political radicalism with Greenwich Village love affairs.

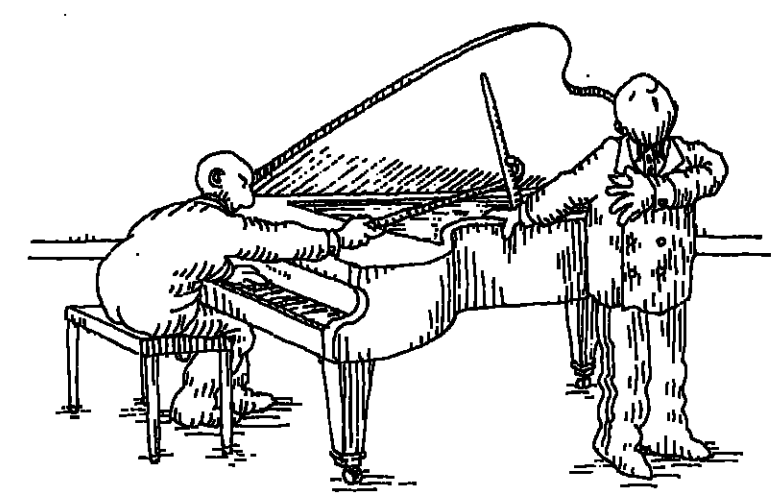
'I suppose I'll always be a Romanticist', he wrote in 1917 three years before his death, and a romantic desire for action moved him always towards social revolt and rebellion. It was almost inevitable that he should be around as a reporter when the Bolsheviks took power in Russia in 1917. He was in the Smolny Institute, at the Winter Palace, and he interviewed Lenin and Trotsky. His *Ten Days That Shook The World* carried an introduction by Lenin, and remains the most dramatic and vivid account of those astonishing weeks. Back home in America, Reed became involved in the bitter wrangling around the foundation of an American Communist Party. His factional fight with Louis Fraina was taken back to the Comintern for decision, and there Reed fell foul of Zinoviev and Radek. His bitterness when decisions were reached without adequate discussion was such that he

resigned his post as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, although the resignation was quickly withdrawn. A few weeks later he contracted typhus, and died in Moscow. Lenin ordered a state funeral.

John Reed's life has meaning only in the context of politics, but this is not a political film. It is, instead, an account of the love affair and marriage of Reed and Louise Bryant, former wife of a Portland dentist, an excitable and erratic figure who also had aspirations to journalism, and even wrote a book about 'My Six Months in Russia'. Their off-and-on love affair occupies the first half of the film. Is politics or Louise really Jack's first love? Will she succumb to Eugene O'Neill, rarely seen without a bottle of whisky in his hand, who

says that if she was his girl he wouldn't leave her alone with her work as Jack does, she would be 'the centre of everything'? Will Louise go to Russia with him in 1917 (yes), will she disapprove of his later involvement in factional infighting (of course - 'You're a writer, Jack, you're an artist'), will she refuse to return to Russia with him (she will)? And will she make a desperate journey back to Moscow when she hears that he is in trouble, stowing away on a Norwegian freighter and crossing vast icy wastes, so that she can be there at the death? You bet.

Much of this happened, but to place the relationship between Jack and Louise at the centre of the film is to falsify the whole thrust and meaning of Reed's life. More than this, Louise becomes the chief char-



One of Simon Bond's cartoons from *Unspeakable Acts* (Methuen, £2.50 0 413 49620 1), which will be published on March 11.

### Accurately untruthful

By T. J. Binyon

Absence of Malice  
Odeon Cinema, Leicester Square

The hero of Sydney Pollack's new film, Michael Gallagher (Paul Newman), is a Miami liquor wholesaler. Not, perhaps, the business one would expect to find Paul Newman in, but then Gallagher isn't your ordinary wine merchant. His father was the best-known bootlegger in the state, and his uncle Milderone is the top local mobster. Gallagher himself is as honest as the day is long, but these links with organized crime cause a keen, not too scrupulous federal investigator (Bob Balaban), stymied in his search for the hitman who knocked off a prominent union official, to look into Gallagher's life. The information that this is happening is leaked to Megan Carter (Sally Field), a smart reporter on the *Miami Standard*. The paper's legal eagle gives her the go-ahead: 'We may say what we like about Mr Gallagher, and he is powerless to do us harm. Democracy is served.' She prints the article; Gallagher loses his reputation, his business and his best friend.

Up to this point the film, as others have pointed out, is a kind of anti-dote to *All the President's Men* (and in its assertion that to be one of a family is not necessarily to be of one). Family is an antidote to *The Godfather* as well. Not everything is news, it says, and not all news should be printed. This isn't a view of course, that appeals to Megan's editor, who gets her to sharpen up her articles with the investigative journalist's universal let-out: 'People have the right to know.' Nor is it, even half-way comprehensible to Megan, who greets Gallagher's refusal to tell everything in exchange for nothing with an outraged 'very of the fact'. Such blinkered

innocence elicits a beautiful look of resigned stupefaction from Paul Newman.

The second half of the film, however, in which Gallagher sets about getting the engineers hoist with their own petard, is a disappointment. It lacks the thrust of the opening: is a step down to a variant of the caper movie. Actions replace words. The background music, absent or unnoticed up to now, jangles its way obtrusively into the picture as Gallagher ducks in and out of phone booths, setting up fake assignments and laying false trails. The suspicion begins to form that the film isn't really willing to confront the issues it

raises, and hardens as the conclusion reveals an unmistakably soft centre. Justice is dispensed and morality satisfied, the bad guys are rebuked and the good ones congratulated by a folksy father-figure with a backwoods accent and a tea-strainer moustache - an Assistant Attorney-General (Wilford Brimley) brought in in the last reel to clear up the mess. We end with an elegiac coda; Megan and Gallagher saying goodbye, instead of with the sharper preceding scene, showing the bitter bit: Megan interviewed about her relationship with Gallagher by a fellow reporter. 'Would you say you were involved with him?' 'It's accurate,

but it isn't true,' she replies, summing up the film's idea.

But the disappointment is only comparative; the film only fails by reason of the high standard set and the equally high expectations aroused in the opening scene. Karl Luedtke, a former journalist, has used his knowledge of the newspaper world to good effect in writing an intelligent and witty screenplay. Sydney Pollack's direction is sharp and efficient. Paul Newman and Sally Field don't miss a trick, but then neither does anyone else in the cast. It may not start a crusade for a more responsible press, but it's great entertainment.

### Dance of death

By Nick Roddick

Blood Wedding  
Camden, Piazza Cinema

Of all major European directors, Carlos Saura is the one whose films are least known in Britain. Perhaps this is something to do with being Spanish; for most British cinema-goers, Spanish cinema begins and ends with Buñuel. Saura's *La Caza* (1965) had some distribution in Britain; *Pippinotti Trappé* (1967) was shown on BBC2 in the late 1960s; but only his masterly *Cria Cuervos* (1976) was widely seen here. His extraordinary essay in Bergamotte, family analysis, *Elisa Vida Mia*, and his political thriller, *Los Ojos Vendados* and *Deprisa, Deprisa*, are still unseen here. All the stranger, therefore, that *Blood Wedding* should be singled out by Artificial Eye for British release.

On the face of it, it is the ultimate commercial non-starter: a short (72 minutes) documentary about Andalusian

Gades's dance version of Lorca's *Bodas de Sangre*. Neither a 'film version' of the ballet (let alone of Lorca) nor even a record of a performance, it is what Saura has called a 'document on creation': a filmed record of the rehearsal of Gades's ballet. What is more, to anyone unfamiliar with Lorca's plays, the action is likely to remain unclear. In short, *Blood Wedding* hits British audiences with about as many hand-caps as one could imagine. And yet it is an extraordinary film, more than repaying the effort it initially demands. Paradoxically for a playwright who is first and foremost a poet, Lorca is, if anything, more accessible to non-Spanish audiences without the words: his language translates badly, forcing one constantly to reach through the words to the power of the imagery and the folk myths on which it is based. Gades's choreography, which draws heavily on popular dance forms like flamenco and pasodoble, restores to *Blood Wedding* the essential element of folk tragedy, connecting the rarefied story of two lovers caught between family feuds and peasant superstitions, to the very sources on

which Lorca drew. And Saura's camera responds with absolute certainty to the movements and positioning of the dancers, coming in close when the movements are small, and intimate, sweeping along beside the dancers in exact parallel to the broader figures of the choreography.

At the end of the warm-up, the dancers move diagonally one at a time across the studio towards the camera, building a simple intensity of rhythm and sound by clapping that not even the climactic knife fight equals. And, in the wedding dance, Gades stands impassively against a window as the guests dance unseen; suddenly, the moves - and the camera with him - straight into a passionate dance with the bride. There is no cut, just a break from a faint immobility into jangling action. In these two moments are exceptional - not so much something created out of nothing, as the perfect response to a unique ballet. For all its apparent self-effacement, Saura's film offers more moments of pure visual excitement than all the *Death Wish* in the world.

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This book will undoubtedly prove to be one of the most important, and certainly the most provocative, that have appeared on early modern British politics for many years. *Historical Journal*. This is a corrected paperback reprint. £8.95

#### Oxford University Press



## commentary

## Mixing mockery and homage

By Peter Kemp

Nahes Off  
Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith

Michael Frayn's new play is a farce about farce taking the clichés of the genre, and shaking them inventively through a series of kaleidoscopic patterns. Never missing a trick, it has its first act a *pastiche* of traditional farce: as its second, a contemporary variant on the formula; as its third, an elaborate undermining of it. The play opens with a touring company dress-rehearsing *Nothing On*, a conventional farce. Mixing mockery and homage, Frayn heaps into this play-within-a-play a hilarious mélange of stock characters and situations. Caricatures – cheery chur, outraged wife and squeaky blonde – stamped in and out of doors. Voices rise and trummers fall. There are frenetic undressings, dressing-ups, and dressings-down.

All of this periodically hurls as the rehearsing cast fluff lines and muffs moves. Stepping out of the stereotypes they are playing, they reveal themselves as another set of stereotypes: muzzy old trouper, dim-wit ingénue, self-dramatising show-stopper. Just enough emerges about their inter-relationships to suggest that they themselves are wobbling on the brink of the clandestine scamperings of farce.

The play's second act splendidly propels them through such motions. In a master-stroke, Frayn twists his set around. We witness the start of *Nothing On* again: but, this time, from behind the scenes as it is performed at a mid-week matinee. The doors of the set open and slam with the familiar lunatic rapidity, but ev-

erything is now inverted. With members of the cast manically at odds, it is backstage that the comedy is really fast and furious. Behind the scenes, things run crazily truer to farceal type than in the play that is being performed out front to a tiny audience of OAPs. ("There's quite a crowd at the front of the back stalls", the anaemically hopeful ASM has murmured in worried encouragement).

Having first parodied a farce, then brilliantly engineered his own, Frayn finally sabotages one. The touring play, in the last act, is on its last legs. Behind-scenes bile and booziness spill sloppily on to the stage. The set of *Nothing On*, as we start to watch its first scene again, is the familiar framework of doors, french windows, stairs. But the play's shape is suddenly pushed askew by lack of control. Demonstrating how farce depends on precision, clockwork punctuality of exits and entrances, Frayn carefully lets things become unsynchronized until the play slips into a pile up of disastrous collisions, buckled business, and wrecked lines. Chaos escalates, but the cast still valiantly struggles to pretend that everything is as it should be.

Frayn has said that *Nahes Off* attempts to spotlight "the front that people put up all the time and the fact that they will do anything so long as they keep up appearances". Feydeau's great strength as a writer of farce, Frayn feels, is his awareness that "the characters really have to be on the point of profound embarrassment, hand sweating and all that. Farce is about panic". This, perhaps, is why vigorous specimens of it are now in short supply. With the weakening of traditional sources of embarrassment, such as rigid stan-

dards of respectability, comes a corresponding weakening of the sense of comic outrage when such codes are breached. Accordingly, contemporary farce inhabits a never-never world of anachronistic primness or it tries to give a new dimension to the formula by technical ingenuity. *Nahes Off* has profited from the study of farces such as Shaffer's *Black Comedy* in which lighting conventions were illuminatingly reversed; or Ayckbourn's *Norman Conquests* trilogy, in which the action of its three plays occurred simultaneously but in different rooms of the same house. Frayn's most skilful move, however, has been to hit upon a present-day equivalent to the social world of Feydeau to whom *Nahes Off* pays much muted tribute (the inarticulacy of the juvenile lead, for instance, preventing him from passing on vital information, seems an amused nod towards the cleft palate that creates Frayn's actors, trying to sustain a performance with such doomed desperation, are the descendants of Feydeau's bothered bourgeois gamely struggling to keeping up a decent front).

Juggling expertly with its own stock in trade, *Nahes Off* is a farce that makes you think as well as laugh. That it does make you laugh on such a lavish scale is due in no small measure to its superbly drilled cast. It would be invidious to single out any individual performances in a company who have so clearly seen that meticulously meshed ensemble work is essential to farce. Impeccable blunderers, they give the most immaculate performance conceivable, each bringing to his part that blend of parody and affection, intelligence and gusto, that Frayn has triumphantly brought to the play as a whole.

## No sound, no stir, no cloud, no hold

By Valentine Cunningham

Lessness  
Oxford Playhouse

*Lessness*, Beckett's English version (1970) of his own French fiction *Sans* (1969), is one of the most artful of his later dramas. It consists of sixty sentences, set down in the sequence in which they came out of Beckett's mouth, so that the formal arrangement would mimic the spiritual mess that the words of the sentences announce – sixty sentences, what's more, that were then set down all over again, it yet another randomized order, thus increasing the high sense of prevailing disorder. "First in one disorder then in another", as the note on the English first edition (Caldar & Boyars, Signature Series No. 9) has it.

And the litany of distress that these repetitive, circling and circular bits of language comprise could scarcely be grimmer. The scene is characterized by reductions (ruins, grey, pale, little, scattered, ash, passing light, flatness, one alone all alone), by absences (void, blackened, out of mind, blank, all gone, vanished dreams), and by negations (no sound, no stir, no cloud, no hold, no relief, not a breath, never was, never). It's a rhetorical descending held powerfully together by the adroit multivalences of the title's language of lessness. Endlessness, endless, issueless, timeless, changelessness: how these words, uttered

over and over, bring home the awful conclusion that lessness is a lessening of nothingness. *Lessness* delivers, in fact, one of the severest of Beckett's impossibly closed systems: in which the past and future are occasionally "affirmed" but are also "deleted"; in which numerological precisions are hinted in the groupings of sentences and paragraphs (an affair of seven, twelve, twenty-four and sixties; reminiscent of minutes, hours, days, weeks) – only to be undermined by the author's deployment of the dice in the arranging; in which some bright future is envisaged but in terms only of a repeat of Noah's flood or Job's suffering. "He will curse God again as in the blessed days days face to the open sky the passing deluge".

The available version of *Lessness* looks like an ordinary continuous prose text cut up into paragraphs. We've known for a long time, however, that Beckett thought of his sets of sixty sentences as divisible into six lots or "families" of ten sentences each. Keys, or marked-up copies of the typescript, have existed, apparently from the outset, and they've been seen by commentators. There have been radio productions in which six speakers were each assigned to speak one section of text (Ruby Cohn reports three such broadcasts). And now, most interestingly, Beckett has gone further: he's marked up a "manuscript" for Francis Warner and sanctioned *Lessness*'s first ever stage production. The new Rohan Theatre Group, under the mentorship of Francis Warner and the directorship of Warner's pupil Lucy Bailey, thus brings off a memorable coup.

In this adaptation six talking heads, each one illuminated only as his/her turn to speak comes round, stand a huge black back-board in the centre of which appears the more or less constantly lit face of a pained, silent Francis Warner. Curiously, the talkers' heads protrude from what seems to be a background, or

pennumbra, of candy-floss – for all the world as if they were pink Medusas. Warner, though, is marvelously putty-pale, looking uncannily sepulchral, just like a death's-head should be. And, happily, the magic of Beckett's lines redies dead flat, nagging prolixity into the nerve of a rotten plight, soon distracts from those worrying pink medallions. The effect of an unconscious dance, of daunting words from a man of darkness, of important notes from a blind underground, is chilling and silencing.

In the Warner/Bailey production – which must provisionally be thought of as the most accurate account of the work we possess – the voices are labelled Ruin, Earth, Man, Mindlessness, Past and Present Affirmed. That list, both particular and pretty negative, would appear to be Beckett's definitive word in the case. Or is it? The programme notes are extremely vague about Beckett's precise role in the adaptation. What we do know, of course, is the publication of this important stage version. Then we'll be able at least to see for ourselves just how Beckett intends his text to be split up. And we'll find out for certain Beckett's mind in the matter not least of his voices' nomenclatures. In the meantime, here are twenty minutes of triumphantly black theatrical ritual that hold boredom tauntingly just at arm's length as they enclose the terrifying prospect of these voices drowning endlessly on about the truly unspeakable.

The Ellingham Mill Art Society is holding a charity auction of twentieth-century works of art at Ellingham's auction rooms on March 8. Among the artists who have offered their works for sale are Sandra Blow, Mel Calman, Hugh Casson, Elisabeth Frink, David Hockney, John Piper and Tom Phillips. The proceeds will be used to fund a national painting competition and to provide appropriate prize money. Details of the competition are available from Ellingham Mill Art Society, Nr Bungay, Suffolk.

## The comic archetype

By Christopher Wintle

Commedia  
Sadler's Wells Theatre

The chief difficulty with Edward Cowie's first opera *Commedia*, lies in the paradox at the heart of his revival of the Commedia dell'Arte tradition: the characters are resuscitated only to be deprived of what makes them truly comic. "Looking at the accounts of the ancient improvised scenes filled me with a keenness to work these structures into a more 'timeless' plot", the composer explains, "... one which would take potency into view from any point in time. If Harlequin, Columbine, Dottore and the others are archetypal, then I could bring them into my own fantasy world". And he defines his fantasy world in pastoral terms: "I can see *Commedia* as one of those works which resonate with the natural world". Obligingly, the prevalent imagery in David Starsmore's often shamelessly pious libretto represents an extended rumination on "hot summer", "cool autumn", "gold sun", "silver moonlight", "hissing snakes" and so forth. This form of the Romantic dreamer, incapable of true love; Pantalone treasures jewels more than women; Dottore's love is merely bookish. At the conclusion they are all condemned to death by Brighella, here elevated into a ubiquitous Prospero-figure, at once the master and judge of his troupe of "shadows". Only Columbine, the spirit of love, survives.

But archetypes are not entertaining *per se*. Nor can the ineluctable demands of comedy be so easily sidestepped. For although comedy is undoubtedly nurtured by darker undertones, and is often dependant upon a self-conscious play with its own conventions, it relies for its effectiveness, not upon the "timeless", but upon its sense of the here and now. Without an acute control of pacing and timing, and the language and forms that go with it, it is nothing. This was something that Goldoni – at whose hands, according to Cowie, the Commedia dell'Arte "died the death during the eighteenth century" – certainly knew. In the second act of *The Venetian Twins*, for example, Harlequin and Columbine, the servants of the betrothed Zandino and Rosaura respectively, accidentally meet for the first time. Both know that their marriage has been arranged by their master and mistress to "keep the money in the family". Their exchange is not only poignant and witty, but also alive to the absurdity of the situation: "Columbine: My husband! Harlequin: My bride! Columbine: But you're nice! Harlequin: And

you're pretty! Columbine: What a lovely surprise! Harlequin: What a relief... (But what a risk I was taking! She might have had a squint and no teeth!)"

By comparison, Starsmore's libretto seems fey and sentimental. The following shows the reunion of the characters at the end of his second act: "Harlequin: Columbine! At last I've found a fitting partner. How could you ever leave me? Columbine: Harlequin! (She moves towards him and kisses him full on the lips.) Contessa: Pantalone. You are welcome in my garden. Welcome! Pantalone: This is a beautiful garden. But surely I'm right: your husband made it? Contessa: And why should that be so? Dottore/Pantalone: A garden is the work of men, and cultivated to a plan. Contessa: Lizards are slipping by... Brighella: Human schemes are fantasy: dance around the apple tree! (Chorus and soloists weave a tapestry of song...)"

Cowie's music is all too much of a piece with the tone of this libretto. It is insufficiently focused harmonically and rhythmically to make sharp telling points; it has very little variety in its sense of pacing; and its dense textural consistency eventually proves numbing and oppressive. It is this disappointing, it is because, taken in short sketches, the musical idiom is in itself an attractive one: the texture, that of a chamber-concerto (intricate solo wind and brass parts superimposed on a basis of strings, supplemented by percussion and harpsichord), has an individual mellowness, and shows a nice capacity for lyric expansion, notably in the narrative passages, which are the opera's strongest feature. But the score is insufficiently dramatic for the elaborate stage action, which, especially in the Harlequinades, involves the whole troupe for much of the time. It is rather as if the crisp, Hogarthian tableaux of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* were accompanied by the opaque, luxuriant music of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*.

On the other hand, the composer could scarcely have wished for a more enterprising production by the New Opera Group, now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. The variegated colours of the costumes were resourcefully matched by the punkish hair-dos, while the gratefully coalescing geometric shapes of the sets effectively projected the season that changed across the four acts. The acrobatics of David Freeman's characteristic production provided (in the way of story, especially), the standard singing was high (Teresa Cahill as Columbine, and Fiona Kim as Contessa made the most of their set pieces); and the music was sensitively shaped by James Lockhart.



## Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, March 26. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, 200 Regent's Inn Road, London WC1X 8BB, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and results will appear on April 2.

- 1 "Try to be Shakespeare, leave the rest to fate!"
- 2 "Ah! How clever, Shakespeare! The Countess was saying, 'How gorgeous! How glowing! I once knew a speech from Julia Sees Her', perhaps his greatest oeuvre of all. Yes! Julia sees Her' is what I like best of that great, great master."
- 3 The Count said a great many things to me upon the occasion and added, very politely, how much he stood obliged to Shakespeare for making me known to him. But, making me known to him – he forgot a full of great things – he forgot a small point of announcing your name – it puts you under a necessity of doing it yourself."

## 'In Defence of the Imagination'

Sir, – Denis Donoghue's carping and edgy review of Helen Gardner's *In Defence of the Imagination* (February 19) fails to acknowledge, among other things, the generosity with which the author refers to some of those she challenges. Frank Kermode's *The Genesis of Secrecy*, for example, is called "brilliant and lively"; Harold Bloom is praised for "his passionate love of poetry"; much is said in praise of Peter Brook. Helen Gardner's new book is bold and candid, not mean-spirited.

Donoghue thinks it indecorous of Helen Gardner to have used the Norton Lectures to attack a previous Norton Professor. When such fundamental issues are at stake, however, many will be glad that her frank defence of her discipline over-rides the fear of indecorum.

Donoghue seems irritated that so distinguished and respected a figure should defend the concept of an author, and the idea of a probable or true meaning of a work of art that can in principle "be discovered by the procedures of textual scholarship, historical understanding and practical criticism". Good heavens! Without these there can be no study of literature: no point in editing texts, no point in expounding them, no point in reading them.

*Liberé pour rien*, as Helen Gardner puts it. Of course there is more to be said. Of course *la nouvelle critique* has contributed something to criticism as well as injured it. But this book will be valued because it recalls literary study from some of the fruitless freedoms which academic institutions have sometimes licensed, and given it back to the human world.

HUGH BROGAN,  
Department of History, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex.

## Georg Lukács

Sir, – Since one never knows when these things will be dragged up and used in evidence, may I correct George Steiner on the small incident of our personal history which he recalls (Letters, February 19)? The accurate version is as follows: I had heard a broadcast of his, in which he claimed, as I heard it, that all art had to be morbid in its origins, subject matter and approach if it was to be great. I thought this a great overstatement, and when we met on King's Parade said so, adding "What about Jane Austen?" I well remember how Dr Steiner, trembling with kindly rage, patted me on the shoulder and went his way, saying "Cherish your innocence, cherish your innocence" – much the same answer he has given on the present occasion.

I will only add that Tibor Ilvessy did not mean-spiritedly.

## Among this week's contributors

JOHN BAYLEY is Warton Professor of English at the University of Oxford. His *Shakespeare and Tragedy* was published last year.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM is the author of *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel*, 1975.

DAVID DANIEL is a lecturer in English at University College London.

DICK DAVIS's most recent collection of poems is *Seeing the World*, 1980.

KYRIE FITZLYON's most recent book is *Before the Revolution*, 1978.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* was published last year.

ANTHONY GIDDENS's books include *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 1976, and *Studies in Social and Political Theories*, 1977.

VICTORIA GLENDINNING's biography of Edith Sitwell was published in 1981.

COLIN GREENLAND is Creative Writing Fellow at North East London Polytechnic.

JULIE HANKEY's theatre-historical edition of *Richard III* was published last year.

J. K. HYDE is Professor of History at the University of Manchester.

KERN JEFFERY is a lecturer in Politics at Ulster Polytechnic.

JONATHAN KEATES teaches English at the City of London School.

PETER KEATING's books include *Into Unknown Britain*, 1977.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published shortly.

WALTER LAQUEUR's books include *Weimar: A Cultural History 1918-33*, 1976, and *Terrorism*, 1978.

RICHARD LINDLEY is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Bradford.

MICHAEL LIPTON's books include *Why People Stay Poor: Urban Bias in World Development*, 1978.

D. M. MACFARLANE's books include *Central Characters of Conscious Experience*, 1978, and *Montaigne, Major and Sensory Processes of the Brain*, 1980.

DEREK MAHON's most recent collection of poems is *Courtyards in Delft*, 1981.

SARI NUSEIBEH is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bir Zeit, Israel.

RICHARD OSBORNE is a contributor to *The Dictionary of Composers*, 1977, and *Opera on Record*, 1979.

MARTIN PAWLEY is the editor of *Building Design*. His *Building for Tomorrow* will be published shortly.

ROGER POOLE is a lecturer in English at the University of Nottingham. His most recent book is *The Unknown Virginia Woolf*, 1978.

RICHARD RATHBONE is a lecturer in the Contemporary History of Africa at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

PETER REDGROVE's most recent collection of poems is *The Weddings at Nether Powers and Other Poems*, 1980.

NESTA ROBERTS's books include *The Face of France*, 1978.

LORNA SAGE teaches English at the University of East Anglia.

FRANCES SPALDING is the author of *Roger Fry: Art and Life*, 1980.

JONATHAN SUMPTON's books include *Pilgrimage*, 1975, and *The Albigensian Crusade*, 1978.

PAUL TAYLOR is a lecturer in English at Christ Church, Oxford.

ANDREW TOPFIELD is an Assistant Keeper in the Indian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

JENNIFER UGLOW is the editor of *Essays on Literature and Art by Walter Pater*, 1975.

STANLEY UYS is the London Editor of *The South African Morning Group of Newspapers*.

ANTHONY WAGNER is Clarenceaux King of Arms and Director of the Herald's Museum in the Tower of London.

CHRISTOPHER WINTLE is a lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths College, London.

## to the editor

(Letters, February 12) put the case against Lukács with much more authority than I can, and I look forward to seeing how Dr Steiner will deal with his letter.

HUGH BROGAN,  
Department of History, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex.

## Andrew Marvell

Sir, – Surely the fatal flaw in Eric Korn's light-hearted but diligently researched argument, that A. M., as the signature, for the verses he quotes, represents Andrew Marvell, is that Marvell himself wore his hair long. At least that is how he is shown in the engraved plate facing the title page of my first edition of *Miscellaneous Poems*. In that portrait the hair is very long indeed, in fact a clear case of Muliebricit.

JOHN LEHMANN,  
85 Cornwall Gardens, London SW7.

## El Alamein

Sir, – Stephen Harvey's letter (February 26) repeating the canard that Alamein was an unnecessary British victory (it "should have been easily achievable at any time during the previous twelve months") ignores the truth of the matter. If Rommel had not kept Eighth Army pinned down so close to the Nile Delta and Cairo, let alone destroyed it, the whole Allied war effort would have suffered a grievous blow, perhaps beyond repair.

I doubt if any historian will give credit to Mr Harvey for his claim that at Alamein, "Montgomery – and Churchill – surely did demonstrate more flair for public relations than military genius". Battles are won by leadership and command of men, not by PR.

BRIAN MONTGOMERY,  
Army and Navy Club, Pall Mall, London SW1.

SIR, – I value the praise given to my book *The Rise of Opera* by Jane Glover (February 12) very highly indeed, and would only point out one slight misquotation which slipped in. For, as to those tiny Venetian groups of instruments (you could hardly call them orchestras, if they really were no bigger than they seem), I did not suggest "enlarging them with historical possibilities now", but "within the historical possibilities" – words carefully chosen, since they allow for these possibilities being zero, as Jane Glover's opinion is, although mine is not. But I agree that "it was the nature of opera at this period to concentrate on the solo voice", which I too called "the main purpose of these Venetian operas".

As to that decline of philosophical content which she calls a shift "towards pure entertainment", there were a few exceptions like *La Cenerentola* (1766) or *La Delfina* (1769); and then I suppose French opera took its allegorical values quite seriously with all those portentous discussions at the Académie. My feeling is that some operas, at any rate, can offer value on more than one level at a time.

ROBERT DONINGTON,  
Scaynes, Firle, near Lewes, East Sussex.

Sir, – In his review of Byron Farwell's *For Queen and Country* (January 29), Nicholas Best conveys the flavour of the book and makes it sound worth reading, which it is. However, he neglects to draw attention to certain errors and misconceptions of Mr Farwell's.

It is Farwell's belief that "prior to the First World War the British Army never experienced a serious military among its regulars". In fact, more than one hundred men of the Black Watch mutilated at the end of May 1743 when under orders for Jamaica: three of them were executed. At Balacava it was not Lord

Cardigan who charged with a cigar in his mouth, but Lord George Paget. The Royal Scots, the "First of Foot", are indeed one of "the first twenty-five regiments of the line". Rifle regiments – the 60th, the Rifle Brigade, the Camerons (Scottish Rifles) – did not carry colours. It was not only soldiers in Highland regiments who were called "Jocks", but also those in Lowland battalions: Farwell, much smitten by the glamour of Highland regiments, shares, in this connexion and elsewhere, the tiresome conviction that "Scottish" and "Highland" are synonymous, interchangeable terms. He says little about the Irish regiments, but does offer it as his view that the pipes were "important" in those regiments during the period of which he writes, which of course they were not. And one is surprised to find him saying next to nothing in his chapter on "Drink" of Irish regiments' addiction to drink and to riot.

Lastly – since one must make an end – Farwell derides William Robertson for expressing the opinion, while CIGS, that tanks were "rather a desperate innovation". Yet they were just that, as John Terraine has shown in his book *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths and Anti-Myths of War, 1861-1945* (1981).

ROBERT COCKBURN,  
Department of English, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

## 'The Rise of Opera'

Sir, – I value the praise given to my book *The Rise of Opera* by Jane Glover (February 12) very highly indeed, and would only point out one slight misquotation which slipped in. For, as to those tiny Venetian groups of instruments (you could hardly call them orchestras, if they really were no bigger than they seem), I did not suggest "enlarging them with historical possibilities now", but "within the historical possibilities" – words carefully chosen, since they allow for these possibilities being zero, as Jane Glover's opinion is, although mine is not. But I agree that "it was the nature of opera at this period to concentrate on the solo voice", which I too called "the main purpose of these Venetian operas".

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ROBERT DONINGTON,  
Scaynes, Firle, near Lewes, East Sussex.

## 'Voices of the Great War'

Sir, – Reviewing Peter Vansittart's *Voices from the Great War*, Samuel Hynes (December 18) advances the extraordinary theory that the *exalté* romanticism expressed in the war poems of Rupert Brooke and a few other youthful poets of that generation fairly represents the mood of the millions who, in 1914 and the subsequent years, flocked to the standard from Great Britain and other parts of the British Empire to help in bringing about the defeat of German aggression. This certainly does not correspond with my own memory of my sentiments at the time, of those expressed in conversations I had with men in the trenches, or that I found in the hundreds of soldiers' letters that I was obliged to read before they were despatched.

A delusion widespread among us in the early stages of the war was that fostered by a famous book, *The Great Illusion*, that it was bound to be a short war for economic reasons. But for most of those who fought on our side it was, in Hynes's own words, just "a task to be done", one that involved an, on the whole, unwelcome interruption of peacetime activities. And if it comes to the question of moral attitudes, was the Kaiser's invasion of neutral Belgium any the less a symptom of a nation gone berserk than Hitler's inexcusable invasion of Poland in 1939?

T. C. OWTRAM,  
Villa Belvedere, 55010 Gragnano, Lucca, Italy.

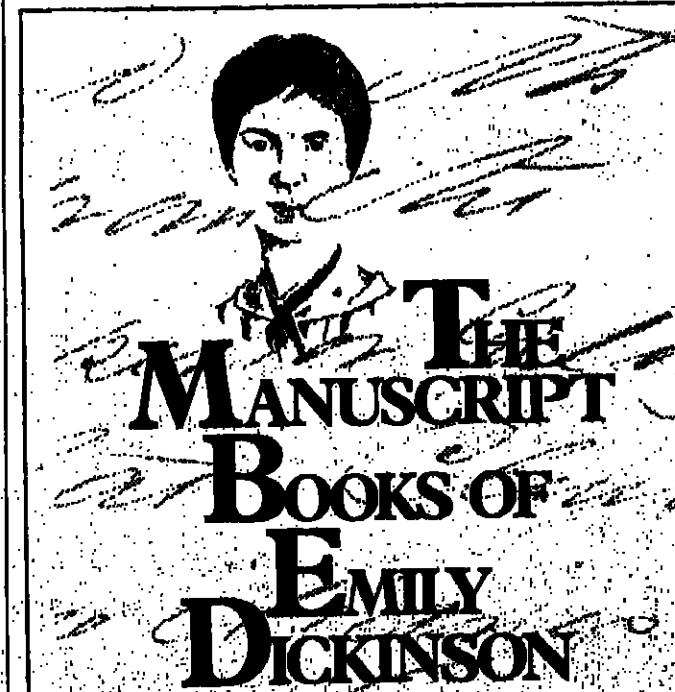
## John Donne

Sir, – Peter Beal and Hilton Keliher are to be commended for their demonstration that a Latin epigram has been mistakenly attributed to Donne (Letters, February 12). However, an equally dubious attribution of two much more substantial works to Donne has recently been given an unwarranted currency by the first volume of Dr Beal's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (Pt I, p. 261), where it is stated: "Two newly discovered sermons are now added to the canon on the basis of clear ascription to 'Doctor Donne, deane of Pauls' in a volume of sermons among the Finch-Hatton MSS at Northampton (DnJ 450-1)". I have had copies of these sermons since 1964 but have never been able to persuade either myself or anyone I consulted that they are likely to be Donne's work. All internal evidence is against the attribution: style, methods, attitudes. It is fortunate that the *Index* records I. A. Shapiro's scepticism about the attribution, for the very qualities listed in the description as possibly giving the sermons special interest because they are so unusual in Donne

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## Methuen

47, Kinder Road, Hayfield, Derbyshire SK12 5HS.

## to the editor

## 'Norse Poems'

provide strong reasons for 'supposing them not to be by Donne at all.

The compilers of the *Index* appear to have been unaware that the descriptions on the title-page of the Finch-Hatton volume are unreliable. The sermons attributed to Donne are immediately followed by one that is wrongly ascribed to "Doctor Curle Bt. of Winchester". This is another "clear ascription" written in exactly the same hand as the two to Donne, but it can be proved false because the sermon is known to be by Brian Duppa: it was published under his name with the title, *Angels Rejoicing for Sinners Repenting*, in 1648.

The *Index* (pp 559-60) gives the date "c. 1632-4" for the Finch-Hatton MS, presumably because some of the authors are listed by clerical dignities and positions they held during that period, but the true date is certainly much later. The first sermon in the volume, attributed this time correctly to Duppa (whose name, however, is accidentally given a satiric form: "Doctor Dupper"), was preached before Charles I at Newport on October 25, 1648, and immediately published with the title, *The Soules Soliloquie* (received by George Thomason on November 14). The Finch-Hatton MS 247 is probably interesting not so much for its extremely dubious attributions to Donne as for indications that it may be a compilation made by Anglicans and Royalists, presumably connected with the Hatton family, for devotional purposes during the period of Puritan rule.

Let us hope that as the vast and much-needed *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* continues with subsequent volumes into later periods such cases as the two sermons in question will be described simply as doubtful or uncertain attributions and not as additions to the canon of the author's work. This will be an increasingly important consideration, since the later seventeenth century abounds in manuscripts with definite contemporary attributions that are definitely false, although in the Restoration era this problem arises more often with the salacious than the sermon literature.

ALLAN PRITCHARD,  
University College, University of Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1.

## Translating 'Beowulf'

Sir, - As long as M. Mouradian (Letters, January 15) is setting T. A. Shippey (January 1) straight about French translations of *Beowulf*, I would observe that there is a more recent translation than that of Walter Thomas (1919): in 1937 Camille Monnet published a French translation (Turin), based upon the Italian translation of Federico Olivero (1934). Thomas's version, by the way, does not include lines 491-709 of the poem.

STANLEY B. GREENFIELD,  
2056 Orchard St. Eugene, Oregon 97403.

## 'Language of the Underworld'

Sir, - Percy Selwyn speculates (Letters, February 5) on the use of the slang word *pig* for policeman and its possible survival from the days of the Bow-Street runner. The new edition of Hotten's *Slang Dictionary* published in 1887 indicated that the word was used at that time to denote either a plain-clothes officer or an informer, who was also called at the time a nose or a nark. In this century

copper, rozzer, or bluebottle seem to predominate in English underworld slang as the name for a policeman, and *nark* or *grass* for an informer. One wonders whether nineteenth-century emigrants to America took the old usage with them or whether *pig* has simply been "reinvented".

It is interesting that a lower-deck name for a naval officer was a *naval pig*, and a petty officer was a *small pig*. The corollary of this was to call the wardroom the *pigsy* and the general pejorative description of naval officers as *pigs* etc.

ARTHUR G. CREDLAND,  
59 Sherwood Drive, Anlaby Common, Hull.

## 'The Arrogant Connoisseur'

Sir, - It seems rather unjust to call Richard Payne Knight a pseudo-scholar, as does Grevel Lindop (Commentary, February 19), just because he happened to live a long time ago. His *Worship of Priapus*, although reviled by contemporaries for moral reasons, was an intellectual product of its time, a very early example of comparative anthropology. One might as easily say that Priestley and Lavoisier practised pseudo-science because the accumulated knowledge available to a modern scientist was not known to them.

DONALD M. BAILEY,  
74 Ferme Park Road, London N8.

## Last Words

Sir, - Paul J. Korshin (Letters, January 29) assumes that the "last words" "This bath not offended the King" attributed to Sir Thomas More were an invention of "the more hagiographical lives of More that began to appear in the nineteenth century". In fact these exact words (complete with what he strangely terms the "unusually archaizing of the verb") appear in the anecdote recorded by Francis Bacon in his *Apophthegms New and Old* (1624) 22, and this preceded the appearance in print of the similar phrase "That had never committed treason" in Cresacre More's biography of c. 1631.

## Information, please

*Celtic Times* (1887-88) and *The Gael* (1887-88), weekly newspapers, published Dublin: whereabouts of files; for a biography of the editor of the former. M. Bourke, Room 12, North Block, Government Buildings, Dublin 2, Ireland.

*Captain Basil Hall, RN* (1788-1844), writer, traveller and navigator: whereabouts of his journal (1800-42) and correspondence; for a family history. M. M. Whitlock, 112a Ashley Gardens, London SW1P 1JH.

*Georgette Heyer* (Mrs Ronald Rongier), novelist: letters, reminiscences etc sought; for a study. Jane Aiken Hodge, 23 Eastport Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1TL.

*Edward Jenner* (1749-1823), discoverer of vaccination: any correspondence, diaries, journals, or memorabilia, for a new biography. R. B. Fisher, 26 St Paul's Road, London N1.

*RAF Methwagh*, World War Two bomber airfield in Lincolnshire: recollections sought from ex-Servicemen, Air Ministry officials and contractors' employees; for a history of the airfield. A. R. H. Clark, 34 High Street, Ruskington, Leicestershire.

*Arnold Bennett* (1867-1931): location of any unpublished drawings, sketches or photographs of Bennett; for a book. David Finch, 47, Kinder Road, Hayfield, Derbyshire SK12 5HS.

*Sir Walter Wilson Greg* (1875-1959), editor and bibliographer: whereabouts of any letters or papers bearing upon his activities as General Editor of the Malone Society and his works on English dramatic manuscripts; for a study. T. H. Howard-Fill, Department of English, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

*Hugo von Hofmannsthal* (1874-1929), Austrian poet and dramatist: information relating to his associations and activities in England in June/July 1925. Douglas A. Joyce, Department of German, Trinity College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1H8.

*Malcolm de Chazal*: any information sought about this author; for a critical selection of his aphorisms and prose. E. Howitt, Department of Philosophy, The University, Manchester M13 9PL.

*Hunter Diack* (1908-74): any examples of his verse, especially those written between 1940 and 1970; for a possible collection. J. A. Olson, 396 Great Western Road, Aberdeen AB1 6NR.

*Barry Fitzgerald* (William Shields), stage and film actor: any personal reminiscences and anecdotes; for a biography. Thomas A. Hogarty, 9 South Longshore Road, Rockville Centre, NY 11570.

*Robert Gwynne* (b 1903), Southern-born American artist: any reminiscences, letters, writings or other information, especially items concerning his use of racial and other social themes; for a study. Charles K. Piehl, 410 Clark St, Mankato, Minnesota 56001.

*Charles Hall* (1745?-1825?), writer: letters etc sought; also information about his stay in Twickenham (1790?-1810?); for a study. Claudio Francescetti, Via Perazzo 5, 10146 Torino, Italy.

*Sterling Hayden*, American actor and writer: any interviews, reviews, articles or information from the year 1959 onwards; to assist in a biographical study. Will Chalmers, 30 Craigsmarn Road, Portlithen, Aberdeen AB1 4QR.

*Emily Herman*, author of religious books: biographical data, reminiscences, letters, or other material; for a biographical essay. Rosalie Ryan, College of St Catherine, St Paul, Minnesota 55105.

*Llewellyn; a Tale of Cambria in Four Cantos*: published by G. H. Huttman, Military Orphan Press, Calcutta, 1838; details of anonymous author required. Mele Stephens, 42 Church Road, Whitechurch, Cardiff.

*Ogden Nash*: copy sought of his poem "No, No, November"; for a research project. Leon Slade, 1 Brand Street, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149, Australia.

*Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood VC* (1838-1919): any information about his life, not from published sources; whereabouts of letters, diaries, etc; for a biography. Martin J. Hawden, Stone's House, Crouch Lane, Sefton, East Sussex BN25 1PT.

*Admiral Arthur Phillip* (1738-1814), first Governor of New South Wales: whereabouts of his papers; information concerning him and his family; his friends the merchants (John) Lane of Nicholas Lane, the Standerts and the Whiteheads (Portuguese traders) and his associates, the Loyd James Mario Matra and Henry Brewer; for a biography. Alan Frost, Scrases Farm, Westbury Lane, Purley, Reading RG8 8DL, Berkshire.

*Robert Townson* (1762-1827), writer on natural history and mineralogy, traveller (widely in Europe and in 1807 to Australia where he died) and linguist: any information, especially letters; sought for a full biography. H. S. Torrens, Department of Geology, University of Keele, Staffordshire ST5 5BG.

*Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood VC* (1838-1919): any information about his life, not from published sources; whereabouts of letters, diaries, etc; for a biography. Martin J. Hawden, Stone's House, Crouch Lane, Sefton, East Sussex BN25 1PT.

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## Charles Ryder's Schooldays

By Evelyn Waugh

## CHAPTER ONE: RYDER BY GASLIGHT

Last August one of my colleagues, examining the Evelyn Waugh file for 1970 in a search for evidence bearing on a contractual negotiation with his publishers Eyre Methuen, came upon a thirty-four-page typescript entitled *Charles Ryder's Schooldays*. There was nothing to show why this piece had been put in the 1970 file. It was a good carbon bearing the stamp of Alex McLachlan, literary type-copying specialist of St Leonards-on-Sea, described by Professor Robert Murray Davis in his book *Evelyn Waugh, Writer as Waugh's long-suffering typist*. It was apparently intended for submission, since it bore on the title page the label of A. D. Peters, Literary Agent.

The manuscript could be read as a self-contained short story about the young Charles Ryder at public school. But the Evelyn Waugh diaries for 1945 suggest a different history. On September 25, 1945, he wrote: "Yesterday I read my *Lancing* diaries through with unimpaired ease. Then on October 2 he wrote: "... my life seems more placid and happy than ever. I have begun a novel of school life in 1919 - as untopical a theme as could be found." On October 28: "The last three weeks have been happy and uneventful: Laura cooking better, wine lasting out, weather splendid. I have written more of the school story. ... This is the last mention of the enterprise in the diary entries, and there is no hint in the 1945 A. D. Peters file, now at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, of what passed between Waugh and A. D. Peters on the subject.

I sought help from two authorities. Colonel Don MacNamara, late of the US Marine Corps and now writing a thesis at the University of Texas on the relationship between Waugh and A. D. Peters, drew a blank in the 1945 files, but was able to report that the original manuscript of the piece was conveyed to Texas with the rest of the Waugh material. I asked Donat Gallagher of the University of North Queensland, who is in London editing *The Complete Essays and Articles of Evelyn Waugh* for publication by Eyre Methuen in 1983, what he made of it. He has a photo-copy of the original manuscript and pointed out a large number of literals (which have been corrected for printing here), at variance with Waugh's correct spellings in manuscript, which suggest that Waugh may have been as long-suffering in his relationship with McLachlan as the latter was with him. Gallagher points out that in many respects Charles Ryder's *Schooldays* picks up detail and incident from the *Lancing* diaries. He makes two further observations. First, that the manuscript of *Brideshead Revisited* contains a considerable amount of material about Charles Ryder's early life and family background which does not appear in the published version of the novel. Second, he would expect Waugh to want to emphasize clearly something that does not come out in the published version of *Brideshead*: the contrast between the family backgrounds of Sebastian and Ryder. Perhaps this helps to explain Waugh's settling down, in an apparently happy and relaxed frame of mind, to embark on a novel on this subject.

What happened then has to be conjecture. We have no evidence that the piece was submitted to any magazine, and it would be surprising if any ensuing rejection letters had not been kept in the Waugh file. Perhaps Waugh and Peters agreed that the time wasn't ripe for submitting this fragment; perhaps Peters, after reading it, talked Waugh out of proceeding with the novel. My guess is that the typescript went into Peters's desk drawer and that when he was going through his desk in 1970 he found it and put it in the current file. Maybe publication here will flush out an editor who wrote a careful rejection letter in the autumn of 1945.

Michael Sissons

There was a scent of dust in the air; a thin vestige surviving in the twilight from the golden clouds with which before the House Room fags had filled the evening sunshine. Light was falling. Beyond the trefails and branched mullions of the windows the towering autumnal leaf was now flat and colourless. All the eastward slope of Spierpoint Down, where the College buildings stood, lay lost in shadow; above and behind, on the high lines of Chantonbury and Spierpoint Ring, the first day of term was gently dying.

In the House Room thirty heads were bent over their books. Few form-masters had set any preparation that day. The Classical Upper Fifth, Charles Ryder's new form, were "voting last term's work" and Charles was writing his diary under cover of Hassall's History. He looked up from the page to the darkening texts which sat in Gothic script around the fire.

"Get on with your work, Ryder," said Apthorpe.

Apthorpe has greased into being a house-captain this term, Charles wrote. This is his first evening school. He is being thoroughly officious and on his dignity.

"Can we have the light on, please?"

"All right, Wykham-Blake, put it on." A small boy rose from the under-school table. "Wykham-Blake, I said. There's no need for everyone to move."

A rattle of the chain, a hiss of gas, a brilliant white light over half the room. The other light hung over the new boys' table.

"Put the light on one of you, whatever your names are."

Six startled little boys looked at Apthorpe and at one another, all began to rise together, all sat down, all looked at Apthorpe in consternation.

"Oh, for heaven's sake."

Apthorpe leaned over their heads and pulled the chain; there was a hiss of gas but no light. "The by-pass is out. Light it, you." He threw a box of matches to one of the new boys who dropped it, picked it up, climbed on the table and looked miserably at the white glass shade, the three hissing mantles and at Apthorpe. He had never seen a lamp of this kind before; at home and at his private school there was electricity. He lit a match and poked at the lamp, at first without effect; then there was a loud explosion; he stepped back, stumbled and nearly lost his footing among the books and ink-pots, blushed hotly and regained the bench. The matches remained in his hand and he stared at them, lost in an agony of indecision. How should he dispose of them? No head was raised but everyone in the House Room exulted in the drama. From the other side of the room Apthorpe held out his hand indignantly.

"When you have quite finished with my matches perhaps you'll be so kind as to give them back."

In despair the new boy threw them towards the house-captain; in despair he threw slightly wide. Apthorpe made no attempt to catch them, but watched them curiously as they fell to the floor. "How very extraordinary," he said. The new boy looked at the new boy. Apthorpe looked at the new boy. "Would it be troubling you too much if I asked you to give me my matches?" he said.

The new boy rose to his feet, walked the few steps, picked up the match-box and gave it to the house-captain, with the ghostly semblance of a smile.

"Extraordinary crew of new men we have this term," said Apthorpe. "They seem to be entirely half-witted. Has anyone been turned on to look after this man?"

"Please, I have," said Wykham-Blake.

"A grave responsibility for one as young. Try and convey to his limited intelligence that it may prove a palatable practice here to throw match-

boxes about in evening school, and laugh at house officials. By the way, is that a work-book you're reading?"

"Oh, yes, Apthorpe." Wykham-Blake raised a face of cherubic innocence and presented the back of the *Golden Treasury*.

"Who's it for?"

"Mr Graves. We're to learn any Milton on his blindness."

"How, may one ask, did that take your fancy?"

"I learned it once before," said Wykham-Blake and Apthorpe laughed indulgently.

"Young blighter," he said.

Charles wrote: Now he is snooping round seeing what books men are reading. It would be typical if he got someone beaten his first evening school. The day before yesterday this time I was in my dinner-jacket just setting out for dinner at the d'Almeida with Aunt Philippa before going to water-tight compartments. Now I am absorbed in the trivial round of House politics. Graves has played hell with the house-captain and the house-captain has played hell with the house-captain. The only consolation was seeing the war on Wheatley's fat face when the locker list went up. He thought he was a cert for the Settle this term. Bad luck on Tamplin though. I never expected to get on but I ought by all rights to have been above O'Malley. What a tick Graves is. It all comes of this rotten system of switching round house-tutors. We ought to have the best of Heads instead of which they try to tickle like Graves on us before giving them a house. If only we still had Frank.

Charles's handwriting had lately begun to develop certain ornamental features - Greek Bs and flourished crossings. He wrote with conscious style. Whenever Apthorpe came past he would turn a page in the history book, hesitate and then write as though making a note from the text. The hands of the clock crept on to half past seven when the porter's handbell began to sound in the cloisters on the far side of Lower Quad. This was the signal of release. Throughout the House Room heads were raised, pages blotted, books closed, fountain-pens screwed up. "Get on with your work," said Apthorpe. "I haven't said anything about moving." The porter and his bell passed up the cloisters, grew faint under the arch by the library steps, were barely audible in the

Upper Quad, grew louder on the steps of Old's House and very loud in the cloister under Head's. At last Apthorpe tossed the *Bystander* on the table and said "All right."

"How d'you know?"

"O'Malley told me. He thought he'd been rather fly."

"Typical of Graves to fall for a tick like that."

"It's all very well," said Wheatley, plaintively, from across the table; "I don't think they've any right to put Graves in like this. I only came to Spierpoint because my father knew Frank's brother in the Guards. I was jolly bored. I can tell you, when they moved Frank. I think he wrote to the Head about it. We pay more in Head's and get the worst of everything."

"To keep his hands in his pockets thus with his coat back and the middle button alone fastened - was now his privilege, for he was in his third year. He could also wear coloured socks and was indeed at the moment wearing a pair of hosiery silk with white clocks, purchased the day before in Jermyn Street. There were several things, formerly forbidden, which were now his right. He could link his arm in a friend's and he did so now, strolling across to Hall arm-in-arm with Tamplin."

They paused at the top of the steps and stared out in the gloaming. To their left the great bulk of the chapel loomed immensely; below them the land fell away in terraces to the playing-field, where their dark fringe of elm, headlighted more continuously up and down the coast road; the estuary was just traceable, a lighter streak across the grey lowland, before it merged into the calm and invisible sea.

"Same old view," said Tamplin.

"Give me the lights of London," said Charles. "I say, it's often luck for you about the Settle."

"Oh, I never had a chance. It's rotten luck on you."

"Oh, I never had a chance. But O'Malley."

"It all comes of having that tick Graves instead of Frank."

"The buxom Wheatley looked jolly bored. Anyway, I don't envy O'Malley's job as head of the dormitory."

"That's how















## The drive for wealth

By J. K. Hyde

MARVIN B. BECKER:  
Medieval Italy  
Constraints and Creativity  
343pp. Indiana University Press. £10.50.  
0 253 15294 1

During the past twenty years knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of fourteenth and fifteenth-century Florence have been passed on by a distinguished band of (mainly American) historians whose spate of publications shows no sign of slackening. Marvin Becker, whose writings on fourteenth-century Florence are well known, has in this latest book directed his enquiries backward as far as the tenth and eleventh centuries in search of the roots of a society which he sees as characterized by a high degree of co-operation, disinterested affection and trust, exemplified by the widespread use of credit in public and private finance.

The instinct to turn back to the formative period of Italian civic institutions is certainly sound, particu-

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larly as this area has been relatively neglected by English-speaking historians. Anyone undertaking such a pilgrimage must be prepared for more impersonal and patchy source-material, which must be interpreted with great care. However a search which did not extend beyond the chronicles, legislation, legal records and the writings of the jurists would be sure to throw new light on the multitude of associations and societies formed by the rapidly expanding populations of the cities, among which the commune was to acquire a dominant position from around the turn of the twelfth century. The elucidation of the wider aspects of civic culture in this period is hampered by the extraordinary lack of literary self-expression springing from communal Italy before the time of Dante's teacher Brunetto Latini, for there was nothing in northern Italy to compare with the lively pictures of the roots of a society which he sees as characterized by a high degree of co-operation, disinterested affection and trust, exemplified by the widespread use of credit in public and private finance.

Becker sees the Italian cities, "with their heightened social mobility, new wealth, far-flung trade, and elaborate credit operations" as the motors of change, but he seeks their effects not in communal institutions, which are hardly mentioned except in passing, but in the evolution of religious ideas which, he claims, show a movement from an archaic culture based on gift-exchange to an emphasis on holy poverty and practical charity which culminated in the Franciscans. It cannot be denied that such a thread can be traced in the ideas of Italian religious reformers, some of whom, like Peter Damian in the passage quoted on page 87, were consciously reacting against new-found affluence. However, at times Becker himself seems to doubt his ability to carry his readers with him, as when he writes "A discussion of

the miracles of the Virgin in conjunction with the miracles of coinage and credit can raise questions in the mind of even the most kindly disposed reader. Yet these two developments are not so disparate; each required risk-taking and the individual's stepping outside the bounds of traditional security; each required that the believer have confidence in the efficacy of abstract ties."

Readers will react to suggestions of this kind according to their own dispositions; more objectively unacceptable is the running together of poverty and preaching movements with their un-sacred and often lay outlook, and the drive towards the independence of the Church under the exclusive control of its own hierarchy, enjoying all its property under the protection of its own laws and stressing the functional inferiority of the laity. This can only be achieved by the very careful selection of evidence; it is not by chance that the poverty-mun Damian carries twenty-four entries in the index while the unswerving defender of clerical rights, Cardinal Humbert, is mentioned only once. His pupil Gregory VII scores six entries, appearing in the unexpected role of a believer in the "incarnational-creational perspective" attributed to St Anselm and as a promoter of lay action through his support of the Patrinii of Milan. Paschal II's offer to renounce the *regalia* in 1111 is highlighted but not his recantation and wholehearted enticement of church property at the Lateran Council of 1116, although this is duly quoted in the passage from Miccoli cited as the source for this paragraph.

There was, in fact, no necessary connection between the attack on simony and lay investiture and opposition to church wealth and gift-exchange; the alliance of the papal

reformers with zealots for poverty was only sporadic and based not on common ideals but on common enemies. Becker's account blurs these differences, presumably because he believes that both movements can be reconciled at some deep level within the Zeitgeist. But the religious trends discussed so broadly were by no means exclusively Italian in either their origins or general reception; the hermits of northern France were at least as influential as those of northern Italy, and Abelard was a far more radical representative of the new theology than Anselm. How the French could be so deeply moved by the expansion of trade in the Italian communes is not made clear, while the exclusion of any Venetian contribution, despite her position at the forefront of economic development, remains a mystery.

If Becker's aim is to reveal the underlying consistencies behind what he calls "the problematic and ambiguous", his methods are ill-chosen for the achievement of this goal. Instead of a close reading and deep analysis of contemporary records, *Medieval Italy* is based on a very wide reading of secondary books and articles which are used to support views their authors certainly do not hold. For example, Becker paraphrases a paragraph of R. W. Southern's *St Anselm and his Biographer* which begins: "In the *Cur Deus Homo* then, despite Anselm, we see an opening to the genial and relaxed religious aspirations of the later Middle Ages", and ends "Anselm is resolutely monastic and conservative." Thus Becker claims that "Anselm captured the optimism and confidence of those times" although his imagery "was derived from a social order founded on subordination, obedience and complete submission." But the force of Southern's paragraph is in fact quite different: in the

lately suppressed central section he finds: "The moral force behind the *Cur Deus Homo* is provided by even down to the smallest detail. He did not reject the rights of the Devil in order to make man's yoke lighter, nor to give man a wider scope for self-expression. For that whole range of thought which appeals to man's creative instincts and sees fulfillment of the divine purpose in the development of human knowledge, Anselm had no use at all."

Where a major figure can be misrepresented in this way, at least one minor writer is transformed beyond recognition. Arrigo da Settimello was the author of a Latin poem tinging the loosely stoic consolations of philosophy in a time of unspecified adversity; the work was dedicated to the bishop of Florence and tradition has it that Arrigo was a priest. Yet Becker asserts that he wrote "to minister to the troubled laic conscience" and that, stemming from his poem, "a critique of stoicism gained strength." Finally, even when Becker's sources cite a contemporary text verbatim, this is no guarantee against misinterpretation. An extraordinary view is attributed to Ivo of Chartres: "So dangerous did he consider these wandering hermits and preachers that he believed only a few soldiers would be required to subvert the authority of Holy Mother Church." In fact the text reads "Ad paros solitarios solummodo Ecclesiam dei pertinere contendunt." (They claim that the church of God belongs exclusively to a few solitaries).

The relationship between the cult of poverty and insecurity on the one hand and the drive for wealth and security on the other lies right at the heart of medieval Christianity, but it cannot be explored from bases as insecure as these.

research in unpromising sources which has yielded the names of some of the doctors in practice between 1100 and 1154. The more fact that these are called themselves "medici" tells us something about their pretensions if not their achievements.

Of most of these individuals it is impossible to discover more than their names and the style by which they called themselves in the charters whose witness-lists are the only surviving evidence of their existence. It would be interesting to know more about their training than these meagre scraps can tell us. John of Bath had none according to the malicious but truthful William of Malmesbury. He had learnt his skills on the job. A few can be presumed to have learnt them from their fathers. There is no evidence that any of them had studied at Salerno, Montpellier, or any other well-known centres of academic medicine (none of which were in England).

In one important respect these "medici" were plainly not professionals. None of them can be shown to have devoted themselves principally to their practice. Pedro Alfonso, the converted Spanish Jew, who was probably the most famous of them, wrote treatises on everything but medicine. Ralph of Beaumont was a civil servant whose great riches seem to have been acquired in public service rather than in medical practice. Many, like Ailred of Rievaulx, were monks or hermits who were called upon to give medical treatment or advice from time to time. William of Canterbury, one of the authors of the miracles of Thomas Becket, called himself a "medicus" but he had read Galen and was a practitioner, good at diagnosis as any practitioner. If the others were professionals, then here was an amateur. But perhaps the distinction is meaningless.

For what Professor Kealey's diligent and interesting researches suggest is not so much a profession, as the existence of scattered individuals with nothing in common except for the medical equivalent of green fingers: a sound instinct in a field which remained for centuries afterwards a matter of instinct rather than science.

## Bad Blood

It's a pain that's needed, that and nails and a coach-load of volunteers who'd whistle and tell mighty jokes and be done with all when the night's over. Till then the calendar's damage remains. I stand in the door and take count. The curtains hang askew; light escapes to the street to show there's someone here. A full moon floats above the drainpipes and a cat cries on an alp of junk. And whippers begin to pierce the walls from next door, from last year. One step inside and already it's started - bad blood throbs round a communal head.

Matthew Sweeney

## OPERA

JULIAN BUDDEN:  
The Opera of Verdi:  
Volume 3  
From Don Carlos to Falstaff  
546pp. Cassell. £21.  
0 304 307040 8

Ten years have elapsed since Julian Budden published the first volume of this pioneering study. Now, at last, the magnificent enterprise is complete, though not without a considerable aggrandizement of scale in the latter stages. The volume's background chapter, "Italian Opera 1870-90", is shorter than the essays in earlier volumes, but the operas themselves now command huge wadages. Where *Rigoletto*, in the project's infancy, was granted 34 pages and *La Traviata* 52, *Falstaff* has 115 pages, *Otello* 119. The point has already been anticipated by Mr Budden in his preface to Volume 2. By the mid-1850s Verdi was a man of property and fame, his working methods were more leisurely, his correspondence fuller (and better preserved by its recipients), his musical and dramatic structures more complex and subtly wrought. Theatre archives, too, reveal a growing accumulation of treasures, including the production books, the *dispositio* notes, for many of the latest operas: though not, alas, for *Falstaff*.

The present volume begins with *Don Carlos* and it is a measure of Mr Budden's lucidity and dispatch that he manages to encompass its prodigious invention and wealth of alternative and superseded material of the five versions in a mere 150 pages. As before, the method is to lay before us the opera's literary and dramatic origins, the preparation of libretto and music, a full analysis of the score and its revisions, and conclusions which show a wide tolerance. On something like the textually complex *Insurrection* sequence, Budden is happy to lay the alternatives before us, where Anselmi quotes a letter by Verdi asking for a revision of the Act 1 scene. The French version, on balance, if only because of the artificiality of the Italian text brings the famous friendship duet rather closer to the kind of thing we might expect to hear "in any Welsh public house shortly before closing time".

The production book, liberally reproduced in the footnotes, and Budden's shrewd disentangling of the 1866, 1867, 1872, 1884, and 1886 versions cannot now go unheeded by politically-minded Marxist producers for doctrinal exposition. Marxist producers who feel that the people's will is inviolate are duty-bound to revive the 1867 text; those who wish to preach about or against popular acclime will prefer the politically less adventurous Posa of the 1884 text. It is a further measure of Budden's careful sifting of his materials in this fine chapter that there is plenty of room for the characteristic asides which are familiar from the earlier volumes: the cross-references to the small print of the nineteenth-century operative repertoire; the occasional glances towards other composers such as Mozart, Brahms, Wagner (a persistent, disturbing presence like the organ pedal in the *Otello* storm), Holst and Stravinsky. Characteristically, the *Don Carlos* auto-da-fé is placed, in a single paragraph, within the context of the treatment of public ceremony in nineteenth-century opera.

Like Wagner, is another helpful presence throughout these pages. The play is considered again as a subject at the time of *Don Carlos*'s conception, but Verdi fears that the need for spectacle will falsify the Shakespeare. He goes on to re-ject the potentially spectacular *Amory* and *Cleopatra* with the summary judgment that "the loves of

the chief characters, their personalities, and even their misfortunes arouse little sympathy". The truth is, *Cleopatra* would have involved giving a leading role to a mezzo-soprano, another mendacious coquise in the Ehoi style. As for *King Lear* (where Verdi envisaged a contralto Fool) it was too grand an undertaking ("magnificent, sublime, and full of pathos") and, besides, Verdi had already written his drama of father, daughter, fool, and king in *Rigoletto*.

If *Don Carlos* and *Aida* are Shakespearean in their mingling of the public world and private emotion and their rootedness in primary affections, what of the Shakespeare operas themselves? Anyone seeking in the 240 or so pages devoted to *Otello* and *Falstaff* the kind of debates on music and theatre which have so fascinated writers on Verdi from Shaw through to Auden, Kerman, and Conrad will not be immediately gratified. Indeed, at one point, Boito himself delivers a withering aside on the subject:

An opera is not a play; our art lives by elements unknown to spoken tragedy. An atmosphere that has been destroyed can be created all over again. Eight bars are enough to restore a sentiment to life; a rhythm can re-establish a character; music is the most omnipotent of all the arts; it has a logic all of its own - both freer and more rapid than the logic of spoken thought, and much more eloquent.

Yet so rich is the documentation, so shrewd are the numerous asides, that we are provided by Budden with much new material with which to prepare fresh debates on this persistently enthralling subject. A good deal of the background material, and its revelations of Verdi's and Boito's care in approaching Shakespeare, is familiar from Frank Walker's *The Man Verdi*. Like all good stories, though, the making of *Otello* and *Falstaff* bears re-telling. Our sense of Boito's regard for Shakespeare is reinforced by the revelations of the *Otello* production book where Boito's instructions to the singers are prefaced by the whole of Hamlet's address to the players, an address brilliantly complemented in Budden's chapter by the advice of the first tenor, Victor Maurel, to future Otellos. Vocal prowess as an end in itself, he argues, not necessary: "Ce qui étonne [un public] et le captive toujours, c'est la justice, l'énergie et la variété des accents".

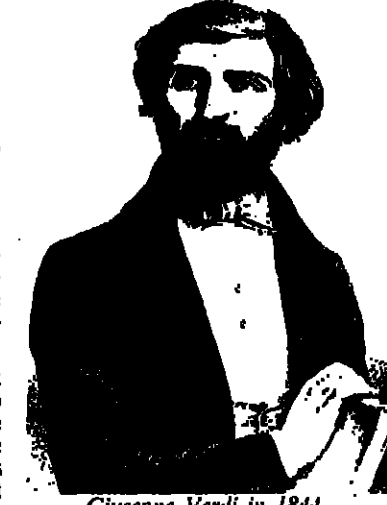
English critics have often been highly equivocal about *Otello*, choosing to arraign Verdi and Boito for misrepresentation rather than accepting the fact that it is, as Joseph Kerman has said, "decorous, rationalized, powerfully romantic"; written, as Budden finely shows, in the partial shadow of Rossini's *Otello* and under the powerful influence of Verdi's own primary image of Iago as the cultured Machiavel, the Caesar Borgia of romance as Shaw disparagingly put it. Desdemona may well be "an intrusively anxious domestic companion" (Peter Conrad's asseveration) but for Verdi she is, like Cordelia, Juliet, and Antigone, "the type of goodness, resignation, and self-sacrifice". Where Shakespeareans bridle at Boito's opportunism (his canny assembling of a text for the Act 1 love duet, for example), Budden is brilliantly perceptive, the analysis musical, scholarly and pragmatic. Though text and key structures are kept clearly before us, Budden is not afraid of subjective insights. The subliminal evidence at the words "soavi abbronzimenti" suggests for him "a happiness almost too great to be believed in".

The "gateway to memory" and the central section of reminiscence, later, when Desdemona's line is harmonized on high by the strings, Budden's recognition of this as a characteristic Verdi device in moments of thematic recall leads him to the brilliant deduction that such scoring is "no less appropriate for the summing up of the remembrance of things past".

## Verdi on the full scale

By Richard Osborne

Sustained harmonic analysis has its dangers, not least the danger of being exposed to mischievous critical attack, as Andrew Porter has recently discovered. My only criticism of Budden's method is that he nowhere attempts to sketch for us the broad principles of Verdi's later harmonic method. His text is full of fine, scattered asides which we can gratefully glean; but a prefatory chapter, harmonically rather than historically



Giuseppe Verdi in 1844  
based, might have further clarified a book which is rich in observations on this topic.

By and large, *Otello* thrives on the density of Budden's observations on harmonic thinking; *Falstaff* does so more intermittently. One charmed moment, the striking of midnight in Windsor Forest, is left, happily, to speak for itself in a full-page quotation. Nanetta's fairy song and, above all, the crepuscular close to the first scene of Act 3 are extensively analysed in writing which puts the sounds before one with a fine immediacy. The difficulties with which *Falstaff* confronts the analyst are its pace and the prodigality of its invention; reading about it can as easily inspire impatience as gratitude. Much of the comedy derives from the play of verbal but not musical nuances. Budden quotes a letter by Verdi asking for verbal elasticity, clear syllables, fine breath control and plenty of verbal and musical attack, qualities alien to most singers of the time. Later, in another generous whole-page quotation, Budden takes the opera's denouement and Alice's Countess-like intervention in which Falstaff, Ford and Caius are all smilingly designated as fools. This, Budden avers, is a fine example of the masterly use Verdi makes of tonal relationships in conveying situations and tones of voice. Precisely so: my only regret is that the point was not only made earlier and does not inform, quite so readily, something like the analysis of the Act 1 Honour monologue.

Probably because the rehearsal books are missing, the chapter gives us no sustained commentary on the character of Falstaff. Coleridge saw Iago and Falstaff as being the opposite sides of the same coin and there are more points of comparison between the musical diction of Verdi's two characters than the present study chooses to engage. Auden's comments on Verdi's Falstaff might well have been noted, and Peter Conrad's brilliantly persuasive development of them: Falstaff the "wise and generous comic potentate" touching the wives with his own lyrical prodigality. Interestingly, Budden sees Alice's soaring "o-ti-vo tuo su me risplenderà" as musical irony, a caricature of romantic excess; though his point is spoiled by a glaring mistake in the music-example.

Many of Budden's incidental insights are first-rate: his sense, for example, of the persistent note of disimulation, musically as well as dramatically, in the scene between Ford and Falstaff. I find the toppling horns, emblems of dickdoddy, at Falstaff's re-entry a comic highpoint, no mere cadential link, but I was delighted by Budden's suggestion that the "after you" byway at the doorway is as much a joke about musical precedence, a witty aside on the old-

fashioned cabaletta's insistence on parity in the final bars of a duet. There is also a fine analysis of Fenton's woodland sonnet. What a precious writer, Spike Hughes, denies is a sonnet and designates as an aria, Budden finely elucidates, setting our minds to work on the difficulty of the sonnet as a musical model and on the sonnets of Galuppi, Wolf, and Britten. There are several fine insights into orchestration gleaned from the late Guglielmo Barban's works on annotated proofs of the first edition of the score and Budden is sharply observant of Boito's deft word-play: Falstaff's punning response, "Ma salvaghi l'addomine" to the women's "Domine fallo casto", a fine moment musically which Auden terms "the only kind of funeral music we can associate with him... the mock requiem".

The volume offers a host of biographical insights. If it ends with the octogenarian Verdi writing his final masterpiece on a mere delighted impulse, it begins with the successful gentleman farmer at a low point in his artistic fortunes:

And if *Don Carlos* doesn't make money, put it aside and ask for *Le Roi de Lahore*, an opera of many virtues, an opera of our own day, not a human drama, eminently suited to this age of *verismo* in which there is not a scrap of verity.

*Verismo* is the emergent topic in the volume's historical interlude, "A Problem of Identity (Italian Opera 1870-90)". It is a chapter which is arguably more useful as the preface to a book on Puccini than an interlude in one on Verdi, but Budden writes elegantly about the rise of Germany, gives a vivid thumbnail sketch of the depression, financial and operatic, of the 1870s, vividly points Verdi's own gloom about the "inevitability" of a "terrible" Euro-

pean war, writes with tact and sensibility about Ponchielli and (I am happy to say) Catalani, whilst pointing out as well not only *verismo*'s growth but the growth of a certain kind of illiteracy. (Puccini's remark is quoted: "A Romanza in regular metre brought on a semi-seizure".)

Only now, at the end of Volume 3, has Mr Budden given us his bibliography, having enforced a ten-year wait on anyone curious about the precise location of such things as Petrobelli's essay on *Moisè* and Nabucco (misattributed in Volume 1). Now we have it, it is full yet germane, and obviously valuable. One assumes that in spite of the price of the books (modest for what they offer) readers will be familiar with Budden's terminology; if not, a perusal of the opening chapters of Volume 1 is advised. The present volume has no preface; instead, there is a list of selected corrigenda to the earlier volumes. Minor errors in the printed text are regrettable but correctable. The index, though, strikes me as being too hurriedly prepared. To take a single example, Budden keeps Rossini's *Otello* far more consistently before the reader than the index allows.

Ten years ago Julian Budden set out to complete a study which would give respectability to Verdi studies. Not a book, he said, for the person - at once patronizing and defensive - who "adores *Il Trovatore*" and "confesses a weakness for Danny La Rue" but a book for those who happen to think Verdi a great musician: a man, what's more, whose opera dwell, in Schoenberg's phrase, "intensely in the sphere of basic human sentiments". Before Mr Budden, Verdian scholarship had been thorough but short-winded. This study, by contrast, is a towering undertaking and the final volume brings the great project magnificently home.

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## Thunder-and-Lightning Polka

The fishmonger staring at the brass band  
Offers us golden eyes from a cold slab  
And silver instances of sea-flow. The birds

Which were dinosaurs once blanco the stone hats  
Of pale admirals. The bandsmen puff their looping brass,  
The music skating round and round its rinks

Of shiny tin, the hot trombones and the cool  
And silvery horns, light  
Sliding like the music through those pipes

And valves, curlicues and flaring tunnels,  
Shells, instances of sonorous  
Air-flow; we take a piece and present it

On the cold air to the staring ears  
Of the sea fishmonger with his wet pets, our part  
Of the hypersensitive cabaret. The river

Slides past all the feet; opal mud  
Full of sunshine, some dead eye  
Caresses the watery catacomb. A hot

Matted fish has greased windows in the paper,  
We eat to music. Above,  
A cool high mountain of piled snow,

Its halls stuffed with thunderwork like wardrobes  
Of black schoolmasters' gowns and lightning-canes,  
White-painted; it turns to one immense

Black gown full of a booming voice from empty sleeves,  
And shakes, and shakes its rain down,  
And I kiss the thunder-water still booming in every drop

That strikes my face, I hear its flashing brass.  
The bandsmen play on their pavilion,  
The instruments flash with lightning,

Their music is full of rain, and fate, I will not go indoors,  
My sleeves are wet and heavy  
Like velvet; the trees are shaggy

With birds and lichen, singing in the leaves  
In light tones and falling drops that break again  
Like little thunder, and cold rain streams across

The wide golden eyes staring from the white slab.



## Graupel Fils

Some five thousand thunderstorm cells  
Ever roaming the earth's surface.  
The rainbow steady in the thunder's shock.

The coldness of the clouds, crisp hard-edged ice.  
Hail in particular is born in thunder, created  
By the fast-twirling vortex of a storm,

The discs hail; by their inertia  
Deepen the twist and cause the storm to blacken  
With massifs of white hail, flint-cobbled fortress

Falling. The softest, tiniest, graupel hail.  
Is what we prefer. They moved him to the tin veranda  
So it might be cooler for him,

The hail tattooed his passing on the roof  
Hollow and hard as military drums.  
The little white sticks tapping out their rhythms,

The wind a wind of metal and white flags,  
Then the graupel softened, alighting;  
A dog of death manifests in the shower

On the tin roof all the dog noises,  
The rattles noises, the dog-sneezes,  
The clicking nails, the short barks and coughs

Dragging its leash, snuffling out its master,  
The dog of ice with jumping bones straddling the roof,  
Licking its teeth, yavling

Our house in death, clean hailstone-and-thunder.

Peter Redgrove

## Richard Davis

"...minding to have sent to Qasvin Alexander Kitchin,  
whom God took to his mercy the 23rd October last; and  
before him departed Richard Davis, one of your mariners,"  
Hakluyt's *Principal Voyages of the English Nation*,  
Richard Johnson's voyage into Persia, 1566.

Our mariner's last landfall was this shore:  
My namesake stood, four hundred years ago,  
The empty Caspian at his back, and saw  
A shalving view I intimately know -

Clean, silent air and noble poplar trees,  
A marshy plain beyond which mountains rise,  
The snow-line and the sky - all this he sees -  
The colours fresh and calm before his eyes.

Fresh as your fading figure in my mind:  
You look back to your little ship, then stare  
As if the riches you had hoped to find  
Were somehow present in the limpid air.

You walk towards the limits of my sight -  
I see you stumble in the dusty light.

Dick Davis

## One of these Nights

A pregnant moon of August  
Composes the roof-tops'  
Unventilated slopes;  
Dispenses to the dust  
Its milky balm. A blue  
Buzzard blinks in the zoo.

Cashel and Angkor Wat  
Are not more ghostly than  
London now, its squares  
Bone-pale in the moonlight,  
Its quiet thou'gns  
A map of desolation.

The grime of an ephemeral  
Culture is swept clean  
By that celestial Hoover,  
The refuse of an era  
Consumed like cellophane  
In its impartial glare.

A train trembles deep  
In the earth; vagrants sleep  
Beside the revolving doors  
Of vast department stores  
Past whose alarm systems  
The moonlight blandly streams.

A breeze-ruffled news-stand  
Headlines the dole-queues,  
The bleak no-longer-news  
Of racism and inflation -  
Straws in the rising wind,  
That heralds the cyclone.

It all happened before -  
The Road to Wigan Pier,  
The long road from Jarrow  
To the tea-room at the Ritz;  
Munich, the Phoney War,  
The convoys and the Blitz.

One of these nights quiescent  
Sirens will start to go -  
A dog-howl reminiscent  
Of forty years ago -  
And sleepy people file  
Down to the shelters while

Radiant warplanes come  
Droning up the Thames from  
Gravesend to Blackfriars,  
Westminster and Mayfair,  
Their incandescent flares  
Unfolding everywhere.

Next time will be the last -  
But, safe in the underground  
With tea and *Picure Post*,  
We'll take out the guitar  
And pass the gossamer round  
The way we did before;  
And 'lfs will begin' once more.

Derek Mahon

## The analysis of want

By Michael Lipton

AMARTYA SEN:  
Poverty and Famines  
An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation  
256pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £8.95.  
0 19 828426 8

How severe is poverty? What causes famines? Amartya Sen proves that first-rate theorizing can illuminate these terrible, practical problems of Asia and Africa.

The "relatively" poor are always with us. Sen firmly rejects muddled attempts to conflate poverty with other evils, such as inequality or relative deprivation (to which his concessions are purely terminological). He largely accepts the sensible, biological definition of absolute poverty: an income too small to buy a minimum normal diet (though a proportion of such an income, usually no more than a quarter, typically is diverted to purchases other than plain foods).

If, in a region, we count  $H$  heads below poverty-line income, we neglect intensity. If the proportion of poverty-line income by which the average poor person falls below it. Plainly " $H$  times  $I$ " measures the effort needed to cure poverty - the numbers of extra "poverty-line incomes" required to eliminate it. Sen elegantly proves, on the basis of few but plausible assumptions, that " $H$  times  $I$ " also measures severity of poverty, if all the poor are equal. Otherwise, using an easily measured indicator of inequality among the poor - the "Gini coefficient" -  $G$  - he measures poverty as  $HI + (1-I)(HG)$ .

Sen shows that this algebra is vitally related to the relief of suffering. In Bangladesh, the proportion of "absolute poor" fell from 76% in 1968 to 62% in 1975. A crude head-count suggests reduced severity. Yet in 1968 one in three of Bangladesh's absolute poor was ultra-poor, i.e. un-

able to afford more than 80% of the average caloric needs for a person of his or her age and activity status; by 1975, two in three were. Sen's formulas can be used to show where poverty worsened, and by how much. They may thus suggest where relief efforts should be concentrated.

A cautionary word in defence of head-accounts of the "ultra-poor", however, is needed. The ultra-poor, the bottom 10-15% in most of Asia and Africa, behave differently from the non-poor and the rather-poor. For example, though poorer farmers (as Sen himself explained in 1962) saturate land with more family labour than big farmers, and normally produce more per acre, the poorest, those with below (say) half an acre of land, tend to "drop out" and produce less per acre. The proportion of women and adolescents seeking work increases as families get poorer - but falls sharply among the poorest 10-15%. The poorest, too, are exceptionally averse to taking risks and non-innovative, besides being unresponsive to migration prospects that attract the merely poor. All this is borne out by the clinical evidence that 10-15% of the population of the Third World (not the hungry 50-60% claimed by some) is at serious risk of caloric under-nutrition. For them alone, so severe is their hunger, one of the best-established "laws" of social science - that as income rises the proportion spent on food, especially coarse food, falls - breaks down. These hungry ultra-poor are detached, by lethargy or aversion to risk-taking or ill-health, from the natural responses to "normal" poverty: innovation, better farming, more work. Different responses need different treatments. Hence head-accounts, to assess the relative distribution of the ultra-poor, may be useful after all.

It is also exclusively the ultra-poor who die in famines. Sen's careful analysis of the famines in Bengal (1943), Ethiopia (Wollo, 1972-73; Hererghie, 1973-74; the Sahel (1972-3) and Bangladesh (1974) accordingly rejects "food availability declines" (FAD) as an explanation. Nation-

wide FAD, Sen shows, did not precede famine in Bengal or Bangladesh. He argues the same, rather less plausibly, for Ethiopia. Wollo clearly suffered a severe food shortage as drought hit peasant farmers. In the Sahel, he concedes "quite substantial" FAD; his data show the 1972-73 caloric intake per head as being 14% below 1961-65 norms in Mali and Upper Volta - sufficient to cause starvation among those who were ultra-poor to begin with, even if the decline were equally distributed. However, Sen argues, FAD nowhere explained famines, even if it preceded them; the true explanation is "FEE", failure of exchange entitlements.

People starve, Sen argues, because of sharp declines, not so much in food availability, as in entitlements to transform their assets into food. Humanitarianism alone is a sufficient asset in many rich and a few poor countries which have social-security systems; Chinese, Sri Lankans and Costa Ricans hardly ever starve, even in FAD years. In most poor countries, the poor may starve because of sharp declines in what they own (land, labour-power, equipment); in the amount of it, or of its product, that they can sell (eg when unemployment rises); in the price or wage they get for it; or in the amount of food that money can buy. Thus, in the 1974 Bangladesh famine, past alienation of land from the poor, plus dearer food and unemployment due to floods, meant that thousands starved. In the Hererghie and Sahel famines, herdsmen starved for want of cereals; usually they sell beasts to buy cheaper grains, but the 1973-74 droughts drove up grain prices, and slashed the value of their emaciated cattle. In rural Bengal in 1943, war inflation forced up food prices, while public policy gave Calcutta priority in food allocations.

These are convincingly presented as FEE's, failures of exchange entitlements, in trade. Less satisfactory is the attempt to present the 1972 Wollo famine, and similar events, as "direct entitlement failures" because "the immediate influence affecting

starvation is the decline of food owned and grown by the family, rather than in the region as a whole." Robinson Crusoe could hardly be said to go hungry in a bad year because of a FEE, however direct. As specified by Sen, FEE covers so much that it is hard to imagine any misfortune not due to it. To define FAD only at country level, moreover, is to weaken it unduly: Wollo, the Northern Sahel, parts of Bengal, did suffer much severer FAD than the surrounding nation-states; especially in Africa, the nation seldom accurately defines a region's scope - or limits - as regards trade, exchange, migration, family, or relief.

Sen has, at last, imposed a sensible structure on our analysis of these tragic events. But it is only a beginning. One remaining question, crucial to the impact and prevention of famine, is: why does a quite small FAD, in some times and places but not in others, tend to produce a major FEE and hence famine? We need to know whether minor food shortages, or rumours of them, drive up food prices much or little; and whether small declines in food output imply lost farm jobs for a few (who starve), or minor cutbacks in work-time for many.

Another key issue is the relationship between decline in food intake (whether due to FAD or FEE), initial intake level before the decline, and caloric requirements of basal metabolism, work, pregnancy, and the fight against disease. For some age-groups, at peak work seasons or where infections abound, a small reduction in caloric intake can fatally erode a precarious position; for others, in slack seasons and healthy places, a much larger proportionate reduction can mean discomfort and pain, but no serious injury. Sukhatme's brilliant work suggests great variation, both among persons and from day to day, in caloric needs

and intakes - and that, within strict limits and over fairly short periods, an individual can adjust his caloric requirements to modest variations in what is available. Beyond these limits of "homeostatic adjustment", starvation (or obesity) threatens. Sen's economic theory of famine urgently requires integration with Sukhatme's account of metabolic and work responses. Then we will understand how policy interventions can "insure" against the risks of entitlement failures affecting people in especially vulnerable places, seasons, and categories (eg age-groups).

One policy conclusion already emerges from this perceptive book. It is that market integration and exchange - often stressed as the essence of development - can place poor people at serious risk of famine. Markets can give workers options after the rains fall, and can pull food to where the demand is; but markets can also destroy farmers induced to switch to cash crops just before the rains fall. Sen shows that rice producers, even sharecroppers, in West Bengal and Bangladesh were much less famine-prone than other occupational groups. Of the shift from food wages to cash wages, Sen writes, "More modern, perhaps, more vulnerable, certainly". The same may apply to much monetization and marketization.

For most Sahelians and Bangladeshis, food security does not mean big grain silos in remote cities (or the United States), but reliable access to coarse cereals. Access is most reliable when such cereals are grown with reliable water control - by family labour, on family land. We have long known that land distribution and micro-irrigation are efficient and just. Sen's evidence on who starves in famines, and his closely-reasoned categorization of "failures of exchange entitlement", suggests that such policies can also be vital to the survival of the poor. Prosperous, expanding, subsistence-based farming is not a populist mirage, but a medium-term necessity.

### March Books

#### Non-Fiction

#### DORNFORD YATES A. J. Smithers

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## Pricking the rhetoric

By Julie Hankey

ANTONY HAMMOND (Editor):  
*King Richard III*  
The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare  
382pp. Methuen. £11.50 (paperback, £3.95).  
0 416 17970 3

The text of *Richard III* is one of the most difficult in the canon. Its problems are so much the outstanding feature for an Arden editor that one might expect, in spite of technicalities, to find the most interesting and cogent writing devoted to them. This is indeed borne out here. In fifty three pages, or almost half the introduction, Antony Hammond, with the acknowledged labours of Harold Brooks behind him, sets out the problem, describes the theories accounting for it, weighs them in the balance, adding to the scales on this side or that the results of recent research, and arrives at his conclusions without forcing matters which cannot yet be proved one way or the other. It is a patient and unadorned piece of exposition, pursued in the notes and in two appendices.

Hammond's discussion, if not all of his actual practice, recognizes more authority in the first quarto edition (Q; 1597) than is usual with modern editors. There are two copytexts: Q, thought to have been set from a "memorial reconstruction" — what the actors, having lost their prompt book, could recite from memory to a scribe — and the Folio (F; 1623), set from a different manuscript, possibly the author's "foul papers" collated with at least one or more probably two of the five quarto texts lying between Q and F. It is 200 lines longer than Q, and is in general metrically, grammatically and aesthetically better than Q. But Q has passages not in F (among them, significantly, the so-called "clock" passage in IV.2), and in some of its readings and stage arrangements it seems superior to F. Ever since 1936, when D. L. Patrick expounded the "memorial" nature of Q (something which is always spoken of as "contamination"), editors have on the whole steered clear of it, using it only for its own significant passages, for the Folio parts set exclusively from a derivative quarto, and for correcting misprints imported into the folio therefrom. E. A. J. Honigsmann in the New Penguin Shakespeare is an exception, and Hammond provides the rationale for going further.

For the Quarto is not just moss-grown with actors' paddings and muddles. It also seems to be deliberately amended; so that if, as Hammond believes, Shakespeare participated in the mounting of his plays, then surely as he says, "by any reasonable estimate" there is in this version a "layer of changes" which derive from Shakespeare himself. Besides, the other layers may not originally have been as faulty as appearances suggest, for in a fascinating section on the habits of the Q printers Hammond shows that much of what looks like actors' contamination may have come from the composers, who also relied on memory. Furthermore, in a section on the "stability" of the text based on Honigsmann's research, Hammond shows that in copying from his "foul papers" to make his fair transcript (the manuscript behind the lost prompt book) Shakespeare himself, like any other author, may have made casual alterations, for better or worse, as well as deliberate improvements. This fact may favour the Folio in many places, but it means that Q variants are not necessarily the actors' and must be taken seriously.

But in spite of this limited editorial unwhithering from the safety of F, Hammond is cautious. He uses the Folio like everyone else as his main copytext, and he insists that the adoption of a Quarto reading has to be based on more than a "literary preference." He makes much of rejecting the Quarto reading "let me die to look on death no more" which even the most die-hard editors have preferred to the uninteresting

"let me die to look on earth no more", saying that we cannot be sure that the improvement in the Quarto originated with Shakespeare. The words occur in the Duchess of York's lament, and, says Hammond, "the F expression is wholly in accord with [his] formal character". But the other reading is not less formal, perhaps more so, and the whole speech is full of just that kind of self-opposing antithesis: "brother to brother/Blood to blood, self against self." Given the argument of the introduction, there's a textual case for making a literary decision. Hammond does, after all, with other Q readings, for example Richard's "spy my shadow" for "see my shadow", and his "chop off his head man, somewhat will we do" for "chop off his head. Something will we determine". (Was this really too good for Burbage to have thought of?) On the other hand, the Folio's "wheel'd about" in Margaret's description of the course of justice is preferred because the verb suggests Fortune's Wheel just as much while adding a sense of giddiness. Editors are wary of admitting to subjective decisions but, for all his warnings, Hammond's case for Q makes them inevitable in *Richard III*.

After so much close textual argument, and after the subsequent sections on the date of the play (which he puts at 1591, earlier than usual) and its sources, one turns, to the section on the play itself with the hope that here the editor can expand a little. With the *Chronicles*, Seneca,

the Morality play, *The Mirror for Magistrates* and all the rest of Shakespeare's influences lodged in our heads, we look, in the end, to the editor to turn them all back into Shakespeare. But what is offered is a humdrum affair. Hammond covers, adequately enough, all the things that have to be said about the play's formal, ritualistic structure and language. The Vice tradition behind Richard is explained, the symbolic function of Margaret, the Murderers and Richmond pointed out. But it all plods: "Characterisation is one of the means Shakespeare employs to . . . 'The language in which the work is conveyed is obviously another important ingredient' . . .

The "ingredients" are all collected, but they never quite come together to give the flavour of Richard or the play. For example, the "actor" in Richard is dealt with in the paragraphs about his indebtedness to the Vice, and again in a section about the alienation-effect; his language is mentioned under language. But these things are central. They should be brought together and deployed to explain Richard's lasting fascination — something Hammond tries hard enough to do. He says Shakespeare got the idea of a witty villain from More; but More's Richard is quite different, the cause of wit in More, not wit in himself. The special quality of Shakespeare's Richard cannot be narrated; it springs out of the theatre. It is surely his sense of us, the audience, and his enjoyment in pricking the rhetoric of this windy play. Hammond never talks about

Shakespeare's stage (except its measurements, to show that two tents would fit in) or how its relationship to a daylight audience affects Richard. But it is precisely his theatrical detachment which wins us. He begins to lose it, and us, when he enters his own play for real, as king, and that is why he is a "bloody dog" at the end, and not Macbeth. There is no need to look, as Hammond does, for inherent intellectual and moral qualities to explain him: "his discernment of character", his "command of . . . temper", his honesty in expressing our own less admirable qualities openly. That way lies Hammond's talk of "sympathy", of "participating imaginatively in his fall", of a "sense of tragic loss", which strains the play.

Hammond recognizes the danger of overstating the psychological case, but he is committed to correcting what he sees as ungenerous criticism of the play, and must find it tragic or elevated one way or another. So he turns to the ritual: "[Shakespeare] invests his play in an aura of ritual or myth to make a drama of wit and exaltation in which ordinary everyday responses must be modified before they apply". Nevertheless, "[Margaret and the Duchess] are mere monotonies of complaint"; the rhetoric has "the effect of marbleising the scenes into a wall of stone music", a rigid formalised kind of structure; Clarence's dream is an oasis of emotion after "the long scene of Margaret's curses, a scene not devoid of power, but one infused with an abstract quality".

Perhaps the whole question of tragedy, personal or ritual, might have been handled by a more sensitive hand at the play in performance. Ever since Shakespeare began to supplant Cibber's adaptation, the stage has had to deal with just that kind of problem. But Hammond's section on performance is extraordinarily dismissive. He berates Irving for cutting, among other things, much of I.3, without mentioning that his including any of it at all, as well as his acting in it, made a deep impression on his audience, and meant, to Shaw at least, the whole difference between Cibber, whose Richard stood alone, and Shakespeare whose Richard is seen in context. In any case Irving's version is simply set aside as "another arrogant actor's booby". Hammond turns away with equal disgust from modern (post-Olivier) productions, merely saying that they "tend to have their own quirks which history will doubtless find as grotesque as we do the aberrations of the nineteenth century . . . No point would be served in detailing these follies; their day is over. . . . Nothing about the deeper interest in the play's political world, nor the darker treatment of villainy since Olivier; nothing about the RSC's experiment with the whole tetralogy, and the sense it made, among other things, of Margaret as a real person as well as a symbol.

This edition is for the textual scholar; for anyone who wants to get a feeling for the play, it is a "resume" of the factors involved.

## The potential for romance

By David Dantell

BRIAN MORRIS (Editor):  
*The Taming of the Shrew*  
The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare  
316pp. Methuen. £11.50 (paperback, £3.95).  
0 416 47580 9

By those not very close to it, Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* is still commonly taken to be poor stuff, even embarrassing: crude, dated, anti-feminist, thin. Crudity in fact came later. The familiar business of Petruchio cracking a whip is from John Philip Kemble in the last years of the eighteenth century improving with catchy business on a line (one of many) added by Garrick for his three-act farce *Catharine & Petruchio* of 1754. Before Garrick, "versions" were so remote as to lose touch with Shakespeare altogether: after Garrick came "restorations" to the original text, which cheerfully altered Shakespeare, slotted in a lot of Garrick and added songs. Though on the whole agreeing that there was knock-about comedy, the scholars over several centuries shifted the emphasis all over the place. On Katherine the general understanding was clear: she did not belong to the same class as pure and lyrical heroines like Portia or Beatrice, Rosalind or Viola.

Older academic critics, disliking the play for such reasons, and also suspect because it was always so popular on the stage, simply wished it wasn't there. They were caught in that circle of Shakespearean prejudice which has been particularly vicious: the play is poor, because it is early. How do we know it is early? Because it is poor. A crop of studies from the 1950s onwards began to demonstrate surprising wealth. And now we have a New Arden edition using words — about Shakespeare's handling — like "subtle" and "brilliantly", linking the play with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* and even later comedies. Parts of Arden introductions can sometimes read like papers for a University committee: annotation in New Ardens can occasionally be flint-footed, compared to the faster, lighter but still accurate notes of the only true rival, the New Penguin Shakespeare. But the Arden series, for all its faults and patchiness, deserves its place as a kind of national

monument to a national poet. There is nothing like it anywhere. For accuracy, alertness, judicious textual decisions, comprehensive helpfulness, lucidity, authoritative judgment and sheer downright usefulness there is nothing to touch the thirty-six volumes now published. Such weight given to this mis-taken play, in only the second volume by a General Editor of the series, is more than welcome. The forthcoming edition in the first batch from the new Oxford Shakespeare will have to be good to come near it.

Brian Morris's introduction, running to 149 pages (half the volume), though it plays the slightly tiresome Arden game of painfully re-fighting old battles, does demonstrate here the value of the victories won. The anonymous, inferior and problematic comes fully into sight as a Bad Quarto of Shakespeare's play. That in turn allows a dating for Shakespeare a little earlier than has been thought, even to 1589, making it "the first Shakespeare's first comedy: it might be his first play". If that is so, it is a dazzling achievement for the time.

The young Shakespeare planning a comedy saw its potential hidden in older stories. In Gascoigne's *Supposita*, the "Luculentio" figure is looking for a rich wife and insinuates himself into a wealthy household where he sleeps with the daughter. Shakespeare's Lucentio is new: "he is not seeking a wife with a fortune", says Morris, "he has not seduced Bianca, and he is seen to fall instantly, rapturously and romantically in love with her at first sight."

It is this potential for romance, for love, leading to marriage, which Shakespeare detected and exploited in Gascoigne's work. Shakespeare makes complex patterns through images from nature, musical allusions and so on: themes of education, of metamorphosis, of love and marriage, resonances set up between the induction scenes, the Bianca plot and the Katherine plot. From these notes, Morris makes new harmonies sound which must convince us that Shakespeare's point, the true of fulfilled romantic love, leading to sharing in marriage, in a world of sharp actuality, the very world of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Four Ardenish plays illuminate the natural life of shrews illuminate Katherine, what she needs and what Petruchio does with her. Shakespeare's play

countryman, recorded in his shrew the characteristics he knew, energy and noise, rather than the venom and malice of contemporary fancy about the animal. Through "the riotous" in the play can be seen nothing less than "the more tender mysteries of love". It is clear what an original contribution Shakespeare made to the old taming tradition.

Perhaps towards the end of his introduction Morris's positive points become a little over-pressed: he is not the first to be momentarily wrong-footed by a line or two in the last page of this play. He seems rather feeble on the possible connections between this play and Shakespeare's earliest histories, which are as startlingly original and must have had performers and audiences in common as well as ideas. He still — undervalues Katherine, so out of place in Baptista's daft household.

For so long, indeed for three and a half centuries, it has been particu-

larly difficult to get to the play. Shakespeare wrote, though it is printed clear for everyone to see a excellent text in the First Folio. Morris goes a long way towards it but then stops short. More could have been given us on the lesser characters — types, and yet get new. There is a great deal more in Petruchio, particularly Petruchio as actor, than Morris allows. The new feel, oddly, like the work of a well-inhibited editor, than the one who wrote the introduction. Some of his wit, and combine with a certain over-solicitude to give almost an air of apology. Sometimes needed explanation is not there, as with the Minerva reference at 1.1.84. While usually rightly defending the Folio reading, Morris is himself occasionally a fraction too quick to amend, for the most modern taste. Shakespearean studies of the last eighteen months, following Hinman's clarifications, are allowing us to see even more clearly that the Folio, as it were, knew what it was doing.

## Response to change

By Paul Taylor

GARY SCHMIDGALL:  
*Shakespeare and the County Aesthetic*  
299p. University of California Press. £17.  
0 520 04130 5

In *Shakespeare and the County Aesthetic*, a mountain of knowledge (both of the Jacobean theatre and of the age in general) has laboured to bring forth a critical mouse. The book sets out to explain "the transposition in court aesthetics accompanied by James I's accession to the throne". It has as its "centrepiece" — something which the burly (borne out later by the text) announces as "Shakespeare's response to the Stuart revolution in the arts" — *The Tempest*. It is on this notion that a work of art as complex as *The Tempest* is best explained as a "response" to cultural change that the book's own responses to the play come unstuck.

Footnotes dense with incidentally absorbing fact support a discussion which has nothing new or interesting to say about either this play or the

late plays as a group. The arresting qualities of *The Tempest* are melted down so that Gary Schmidgall can make risky, levelling comparisons between it and other works of art and types of art. The effect, far from being exhilarating or illuminating, is being bafflingly banal. An attempt to trace the play's so-called "epic" dimension and Virgilian influences gives rise to such insights as that "Prospero is called 'good' by Ariel with the same conviction that Aeneas is called 'plus' (T. Phaer in 1558 and T. Twyne in 1573 translated Virgil's *plus as good*)" and "Prospero as like Aeneas a human side, though we must wait until the act 5 to discover it fully".

Often, too, the thoughts on the cultural revolution (which form the strongest and most genuinely interesting feature of the book) have the air of the retold rather than telling. The influence of Quaker and pastoral tragicomedies on the Jacobean theatre is here rehearsed at unnecessary length. This book, while illustrating the dangers of critical books which are written around rather than about works of art, is best approached as a compendium of often fascinating knowledge about these times. As a contribution to Shakespearean criticism, it is easily inadequate.

## Monuments of intellect

By Sari Nuseibeh

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR:  
*Islamic Life and Thought*  
217pp. Allen and Unwin. £12.50.  
0 04 297041 5

*Islamic Life and Thought* is a bold, somewhat overbearing attempt by Seyyed Hossein Nasr to provide the English-speaking reader with a panoramic view of Islamic intellectual activity. This view, unfortunately, is blurred by the author's personal and highly mystical interpretation of Islam. His enthusiastic mystification of things Islamic sometimes reaches unfathomable depths; as when he writes: "The only way to know Being is to realize our own non-existence and to live in awareness of our nothingness before the Reality which alone is and which is in its inner infinitude transcends even Being." Where the language is fathomable, the total abstraction of its topics from their historical context often renders them Platonically mysterious: the author's belief that Islam transcends time or place makes it simple for him to reach such conclusions as that the cultural upsurge in the Islamic world was due primarily to "the characteristics of the Islamic revelation itself". But such conclusions are glaringly at odds with the fact that it was not men fired by Islamic zeal who most avidly pursued the so-called "rational sciences", but men whose attitude to the intellectual value of Islam was patronizing, like al-Farabi (d 950), or who were downright anti-religious, like al-Razi (d 925).

Nasr's belief in the transcendence of Islam places him among those who argue that the way to remedy the social, economic and political ills of the Muslim world is by a return to the *Shari'ah*, or tenets of Islam. Thus, he thinks that it is merely a fashion to be against polygamy, which is in fact, or "transcendentally", a positive social phenomenon. According to the author, while men and women are "metacosmically" equal, the statement that women should be equal to men is one which "could only be made by a woman who is no longer proud of being a woman."

More generally, Nasr believes that the ideal Muslim state is the state of the glorious past, and the ideal activity for a Muslim is one through which he tries to emulate this past. Such views adequately explain the peculiar nature of modern Islamic "revolutions", which stand out from other revolutionary movements in being "regressive" rather than "progressive" in their aims.

The collection itself is fairly interesting, and some of its sections (eg on cultural and intellectual life) are usefully informative. But some areas of intellectual activity are not covered at all (eg art or literature). And, as it stands, the science section seems unnecessarily arid, disappointingly lacking in more detailed information on the interesting innovations that took place in Islam in such fields as mathematics, medicine or optics. Again, while one can excuse the author for not including mention of all the major Muslim intellectual figures, his ignoring of so towering a presence as Ibn Khaldun in the field of history is disappointing.

In the section on philosophy, Nasr devotes three quarters of his space to Mulla Sadra. This might seem like an unbalanced distribution, but it has its point. As Nasr correctly observes, Western scholarship is not in general cognizant of Muslim intellectual activity after the thirteenth century, when the bridge (Spain) between East and West was broken following the Christian reconquest. Major Persian philosophers of the seventeenth century (like Mulla Sadra) are thus totally unknown in the West. Nasr also points out that Muslim orientalists, being generally Western-educated, are unaware of the continuity of Muslim intellectual activity in Persia up to the present day. It is this continuity which explains the author's remarks, addressed to Muslim readers, concerning the need to return to Muslim roots through the medium of contemporary Persian intellectual activity.

Western ignorance, however, does not make Nasr's call for return to Muslim roots any more realistic. After all, students and propagators of the rational sciences in the Muslim world are and have generally been more interested in the sciences themselves than in glorifying the social or religious contexts in which these were pursued. If Islam is to be praised at all in this connection it is because, at one stage in its history, it

allowed science to develop. But science has gone on developing, and has now developed outside Islam.

Some more technical objections might be raised also. Firstly, Mulla Sadra's distinctions between conditioned existence, non-conditioned existence, and so on, do not go back to al-Tusi, as Nasr suggests, but are found in Avicenna himself. It is true that in his commentary on Avicenna's *Directives*, al-Tusi uses these distinctions to explain a point which Avicenna makes, and that, in this particular context, Avicenna himself does not make them. But he had made them earlier in his *Shifa'*, and al-Tusi was doubtless referring to his analysis of them in that work. Secondly, Mulla Sadra's vocabulary in describing Being, while repeating almost verbatim the words used by the sufi of his school, as Nasr says, is actually reminiscent of Avicenna's descriptions of quiddities (*mahiyat*) in *al-Shifa'* and elsewhere. Thirdly, it is surprising that the author merely reports, but does not deny, or at least comment on the remark attributed to Mulla Sadra that he was the first in the Islamic milieu to have revived the doctrine of the identification between subject, object and act of knowledge. What, then, were the views of al-Farabi or Avicenna on the subject? And who was Avicenna criticizing in his *De Anima*?

In conclusion, while the relationship between unity and multiplicity is central to sufi thought, one feels that not enough attention is given by Nasr to the notion of unity in *falsafah* (philosophy) itself (especially in the writings of al-Kindi and Avicenna), and that his discussion leaves a gap in our knowledge of the relationship between *falsafah* and sufiism.

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allowed science to develop. But science has gone on developing, and has now developed outside Islam.



"Seated Youth" in the style of Aqa Riza. From The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court by Milo Cleveland Beach (237 pp. Freer Gallery of Art. £27. Paperback, £13.50. 0 934686 37 8).

## A mirror for princes

By Andrew Topsfield

RAMSAY WOOD:  
*Kallia and Dimna*  
Selected Fables of Bidpai  
263pp. New York: Knopf. \$10.95.  
394 50693 6

Although not much read now in Europe except by a few specialists and children, the *Panchatantra*, in its various versions, is one of the most successful of all literary works. The earliest Sanskrit text, now lost, was composed more than 1,500 years ago; it comprised "five books" of didactic animal fables, enclosed within a "mirror for princes" frame story. By the beginning of this century more than 200 derivative versions were known, embracing over fifty languages, only a quarter of them in the Indian. It was first translated in the sixteenth century into Persian, and sixteenth century into Arabic, and then into Old Syriac and Arabic. In this form it became known as *Kallia and Dimna*, after the two jackals who are the chief narrators of the tales within tales in the first book of the *Panchatantra*. In numerous versions, it has remained popular both in India and throughout the Muslim world. Its themes inspired some of the best Arab, Persian and Indian manuscript painting; the tales in particular have been elegantly reinterpreted in the illustrations by Margaret Kilgenny to this latest retelling of the stories.

The European history of the book begins with a Greek version from the Arabic at the end of the eleventh century. When the first English version, Sir Thomas North's *The Morall Philosophie of Doni*, appeared in 1570, it derived (as Edgerton remarks) from an Italian version of a Latin version of a Hebrew version of an Arabic version of a Pahlavi version of some Sanskrit version of the original *Panchatantra*. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries versions deriving from the Persian *Lights of Canopus* were reprinted in France and England as *Fables of Pilpay* (or *Bidpai*). La Fontaine records his debt to "Pilpay sage Indien" in the second collection of his fables. Since the nineteenth century, however, fables — and wonder tales such as *The Thousand and One Nights* — have been largely relegated to the nursery. Even as children's reading, Bidpai has fared less well than Aesop, perhaps because its animal characters behave too much like adult human beings.

Ramsay Wood is aware of a lingering Western attitude of complacent ignorance towards Oriental classics. Among the sometimes opaque quotations from ancient and modern authors which he uses as marginal annotations to his stories, he includes a typical outburst from Macaulay's *Minute on Education*: "I have never found an Orientalist who could deny that a single fable was worth the whole of native literature of India and Arabia." Mr Wood's own intention is, in the first place, a rehabilitation of the Bidpai stories in an accessible modern idiom. As he admits in a disarmingly straightforward, he is no Orientalist himself, but a story-teller pure and simple. He has immersed himself in numerous existing English translations: "until, a master, template emerged", to form a basis for his own improvisations. That this eclectic method has worked so well is due to Wood's evident sympathy and respect for his materials and the disciplined imagination which he has shown in recasting them.

In practice, his selection and sequencing of stories largely follow the first two books of the *Panchatantra* in Edgerton's version. The first, and longer, of the two story cycles deals with the separation of friends. Its thematic story describes the disruption of the amiable co-existence of the bull Schanzabab and the lion king by the gullest schemes of a jealous courtier, the jackal Dimna. The main characters narrate further, embossed tales, illuminating the common fables and delusions of mankind. The second cycle describes the winning of friends through the seduction of the rat Zirac, a crow turtle and a deer, who, besides recounting their own formative ex-

periences, contrive by clever ruses to rescue one another from a huntsman. The benign altruism of this section is reassuring after the Machiavellian atmosphere of the *Kallia and Dimna* story. In this respect, Wood's selection, which omits the briefer and less cohesive Books 3-5 of the *Panchatantra*, is artistically well judged.

For embellishment of the tales and for the frame story which encloses them, Wood has relied on the Arabic, Persian (*Lights of Canopus*) and Syriac versions of *Kallia and Dimna*, in the nineteenth-century translations of Knechtbull, Wollaston and Keith-Falconer. In the frame story, the hedonistic astronomer King Dabchehim dreams that a saint (resembling the Sufi guardian figure, Khidr) commands him to seek a hidden treasure. When found, it includes an ancient scroll bearing thirteen rules for conduct for kings, with an instruction to seek further exposition of them from the sage Bidpai. Undergoing a change of heart, the king releases Bidpai, whom he has previously imprisoned for insubordination. Bidpai then narrates the two story cycles to him, as illustrations of the first two of the thirteen precepts.

As Doris Lessing tells us in her enthusiastic introduction, Wood has produced a vigorous, modern version of Bidpai. His narration has something of the spare elegance of the story-telling of Idries Shah, who is credited with first suggesting the project to him; but it is overlaid with a racy personal idiom, a witty mixture of archaic grandiloquence, modern slang and (in some passages) the jargon of sociology, television and local government. At times he tries too hard for effect. The jackals' jostling backchat eventually becomes tedious and the endearments of Zirac and his chums occasionally verge on mawkishness. But his version will certainly be much more attractive to modern readers than the older translations, with their drier, narrative and unfamiliar, oriental hyperbole. Given the same useful treatment, the winning of friends through the seduction of the rat Zirac, a crow turtle and a deer, who, besides recounting their own formative ex-

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